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# LESAGE'S GIL BLAS

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TOBIAS SMOLLETT—II

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# THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS DE SANTILLANA

By ALAIN-RENÉ LESAGE

TRANSLATED BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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THE

# ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS

de Santillana

## BOOK VII

### CHAPTER I

*The amours of Gil Blas and Dame Lorenza Sephora*

I WENT accordingly to Xelva, to make restitution of the three thousand ducats, which we had stolen from Samuel Simon: and will freely own, I was tempted on the road to convert the money to my own use, in order to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. This I might have done with impunity; for, had I travelled five or six days, and then returned, as if I had acquitted myself of my commission, Don Alphonso and his father would never have suspected my fidelity. I did not yield, however, to the temptation, which I surmounted like a lad of honour: a victory not a little commendable in a young fellow, who had associated with great cheats. There are a great many, who, though acquainted with honest people only, are not so scrupulous; those, especially, who are entrusted with sums which they may keep, without endangering their reputation.

Having made restitution to the merchant, who had expected nothing of the kind, I returned to the castle of Leyva, which the Count de Polan had left, having set out again for Toledo, with Julia and Don Fernando. I found my new master more captivated than ever with

Seraphina, his Seraphina enchanted by him, and Don Caesar charmed with the possession of them both: I endeavoured to gain the friendship of that tender father, and succeeded: I became steward of the family, regulated everything in it, received money from the farmers, disbursed for the expense of housekeeping, and had a despotic power over all the servants. But, contrary to the usual practice of stewards, I did not abuse my power, I did not turn away those domestics who displeased me, nor expect that the rest should be entirely devoted to my will: if they addressed themselves directly to Don Caesar, or his son, when they wanted any favour, far from thwarting their interest, I always spoke in their behalf; besides, the marks of affection which I every moment received from my masters, inspired me with zeal for their service; and I had nothing but their interest in view. There was no legerdemain in my administration; and I was such a steward as is not everyday to be met with. While I enjoyed the happiness of my condition, love, as if he had been jealous of what fortune had done for me, had a mind that I should owe some favours to him also; and produced in the heart of Dame Lorenza Sephora, chief waiting-woman to Seraphina, a violent inclination for master steward. My conquest (to relate things like a faithful historian) glanced upon her fiftieth year; but a lively look, an agreeable countenance, and two fine eyes, which she knew how to use to the best advantage, might be said to make her still pass for the object of an intrigue: I could have wished only for a few roses in her complexion, for she was extremely pale; a circumstance which I did not fail to attribute to the austerity of celibacy.

The lady practised upon me a long time, by looks, in which her passion was painted: but instead of answering her glances, I at first seemed not to perceive her design; by which behaviour, I appeared to her as a novice in gallantry; a discovery that she did not dislike. Imagining, therefore, that she ought no longer to confine herself to the language of the eyes, with a

young man whom she believed less knowing than he was ; during the very first conversation we had together, she declared her sentiments in form, that I might not be ignorant of them for the future. This she performed like one who had been at school. She feigned to be disconcerted while she spoke to me, and after having freely expressed all that she had to say, hid her face, to make me believe she was ashamed of letting me see her weakness. There was no resisting ; and though I was determined more by vanity than inclination, I showed myself very sensible of her affection : I even affected to be urgent, and acted the passionate lover so well, that I attracted her reproaches. Lorenza reproved me, but with so much gentleness, that while she recommended moderation to me, she seemed not at all sorry at my want of it. I should have pushed things still farther, if the beloved object had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue, by granting me a victory too cheap. We therefore parted till another occasion ; Sephora, persuaded that her false resistance made me look upon her as a vestal, and I, elevated with the sweet hope of bringing the adventure soon to a conclusion.

My affairs were in this situation, when one of Don Caesar's lackeys told me a piece of news which moderated my joy. This young fellow was one of those curious domestics, who make it their business to discover what passes in the family. As he was very assiduous in paying his court to me, and regaled me every day with something new, he came one morning, and told me, that he had made a pleasant discovery, which he would communicate to me, on condition that I should keep it secret ; because it regarded Dame Lorenza Sephora, whose resentment (he said) he was afraid of incurring. I was too eager to hear what he had to say, not to promise secrecy ; but without seeming to be in the least concerned, I asked him, with all the indifference I could affect, what the discovery was with which he intended to entertain me. ' Lorenza (said he), every evening, privately admits into her

apartment the surgeon of the village, a very stout young fellow, and the rogue always remains with her a considerable time. I am willing to believe (added he, with a satirical smile) that this behaviour may be very innocent; but you must allow, that a young man, who slips so mysteriously into a maid's chamber, gives a handle to scandal to be very free with her character.'

Although this report gave me as much pain, as if I had been actually in love, I took care to conceal my vexation; I even constrained myself so much, as to laugh at the news that pierced me to the very soul. But I indemnified myself for that constraint, as soon as I saw myself alone. I cursed, I swore, and mused upon the resolution I should take. Sometimes, despising Lorenza, I proposed to abandon her, without even deigning to come to an explanation with the coquette; and sometimes, imagining that I was bound in honour to banish the surgeon from the house, I formed the design of challenging him to single combat. This last resolution prevailed: I lay in ambush towards the evening, and sure enough perceived my man enter with a mysterious air into the apartment of my duenna. This was necessary to support my fury: I went out of the castle, and posted myself on the road by which the gallant must return: here I waited for him without flinching, and every moment the desire of fighting with him increased. At length, my enemy appeared, and I went forwards some yards like a Drawcansir[1]; but I don't know how the devil it happened, I found myself all of a sudden seized, like one of Homer's heroes, with an emotion of fear that arrested my steps; and I stood as much confounded as Paris, when he presented himself to fight Menelaus. I began to consider my man, who seemed strong and vigorous; and his sword appeared to be of an excessive length. All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, out of a point of honour, or otherwise, though I saw the danger

[1] Drawcansir is the name of a braggart in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*.

with magnifying eyes; and in spite of nature, which made obstinate efforts to make me desist, I had the boldness to advance towards the surgeon, and unsheath my rapier.

Surprised at my action, he cried, 'What is the matter, Señor Gil Blas? what is the meaning of these demonstrations? You are pleased to be merry, I suppose?' 'No, Mr. Barber (I replied), you are mistaken; I am in a very serious humour, and want to know whether or not you are as brave as gallant. You must not expect that I will let you possess in tranquillity the favours of the lady whom you visit at the castle.' 'By St. Come[1]! (said the surgeon, bursting into a loud laugh) here is a pleasant adventure. Egad, appearances are very deceitful.' From these words, imagining that he was as little inclined to fight as I, I became more insolent, and said, 'Friend, that won't pass; don't think that I will be satisfied with a simple denial.' 'I see then (answered he), that I shall be obliged to speak, in order to prevent the mischief which might happen to you or me; and I must reveal a secret, although people of our profession cannot be too discreet. If Dame Lorenza admits me by stealth into her apartment, it is with a view of concealing her distemper from the servants: she has an inveterate cancer in her back, which I dress every evening. This is the cause of the visits which alarm you; so that you may henceforth keep your heart at ease. Though (added he), if you are not satisfied with this declaration, but absolutely bent upon coming to points, speak the word; I am your man.' So saying, he drew his long rapier, which made me shiver; and put himself upon his guard. 'Enough (said I to him, sheathing my sword), I am not a brute, to refuse to hear reason: after what you have told me, you are no longer my enemy; let us embrace.' At this discourse, which showed him that I was not such a devil as I at first appeared to be, he

[1] St. Cosmas, the patron saint of doctors and surgeons; his feast falls on September 27.

laughed, put up his rapier, gave me his hand; and, in short, we parted the best friends in the world.

From that moment, Sephora presented nothing but disagreeable ideas to my imagination: I avoided every opportunity she gave me of conversing with her in private; and that with such care and affectation, that she perceived my disgust. Astonished at such a change, she resolved to know the cause; and at length, finding an occasion to speak with me apart. 'Mr. Steward (said she), pray tell me, why you avoid the sight of me? 'Tis true, I made some advances, but you made suitable returns. Recollect, if you please, the private conversation we had together: you were then all fire, but now you are all ice. What is the meaning of all this?' This was a very delicate question for a plain man; consequently, it embarrassed me not a little. I don't remember the answer which I made; but it displeased very much, and that was enough. Sephora, though by her sweet modest air, one would have taken her for a lamb, was a very tigress when her wrath prevailed. 'I thought (said she, darting at me a look full of spite and rage) that I did a great deal of honour to a little fellow like you, in discovering to him those sentiments which noble cavaliers would have gloried in exciting: but I am justly punished for having unworthily abased them to a wretched adventurer.' Had she stopped here, I should have thought myself cheaply quit. Her tongue, obedient to her fury, honoured me with a hundred epithets, every one more bitter than another. I ought to have heard them in cold blood, and reflected, that in disdaining the triumph of her virtue, which I had attempted, I committed a crime that no woman can forgive. But I was too passionate to bear reproaches, at which a sensible man, in my place, would have laughed: and my patience forsaking me, 'Madam (said I), we ought not to despise anybody: if those noble cavaliers, of whom you speak, had seen your back, I am sure their curiosity would have proceeded no farther.' I had no sooner uttered this repartee,

than the furious duenna gave me the rudest box on the ear, that ever an affronted woman bestowed. I did not wait for a second; but, by a speedy flight, avoided a shower of blows, that would certainly have fallen upon my carcass.

I thanked heaven, when I found myself extricated out of this troublesome affair; and imagined I had nothing more to fear, since the lady had revenged herself. I thought that, for her own honour, she would never mention the adventure: and indeed, fifteen days elapsed before I heard anything of the matter. I myself began to forget it, when I understood that Sephora was ill: I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news: I pitied the lady; and believing that, not being able to overcome a passion so ill requited, she had fallen a victim to her unhappy love, I reflected with sorrow, that I was the cause of her indisposition, and at least lamented the duenna, if I could not love her. How much was I mistaken in my opinion! her tenderness changed into hate; and at that time, her whole study was to do me mischief.

One morning being alone with Don Alphonso, and observing that young gentleman pensive and sad, I begged, in a respectful manner, to know the cause. 'I am chagrined (said he), to find Seraphina weak, ungrateful, and unjust. You are astonished at this information (added he, perceiving that I listened with surprise), and yet nothing is more true. I don't know what cause you may have given Dame Lorenza to hate you; but you are assuredly become so odious to her, that if you don't leave the castle with the utmost dispatch, her death, she says, will be inevitable. You ought not to doubt that Seraphina, who has a regard for you, at first revolted against a hate which she could not gratify, without injustice and ingratitude. But in short, she is a woman: she has a tender affection for Sephora, who brought her up; and that governante is a sort of a mother to her, whose death she would reproach herself with, if she was not weak enough to satisfy this her desire: as for my part, not-

withstanding the love that attaches me to Seraphina, I shall never have the base complaisance to adhere to her sentiments on this subject. Perish all the duennas in Spain, before I consent to the removal of a young man whom I consider more as a brother than a domestic!'

Don Alphonso having spoke thus, I said to him, 'Señor, I am born to be the sport of fortune: I thought she would have ceased to persecute me in your house, where everything flattered me with quiet and happy days: but how agreeable soever my situation may be, I find I must give it up.' 'Not at all! (cried the generous son of Don Caesar) leave me to make Seraphina hear reason: it shall never be said, that you have been sacrificed to the caprice of a duenna, to whom too much consideration has been paid in other respects.'

'Sir (said I), you will only provoke Seraphina, in resisting her will. I had much rather retire, than by a longer stay in this place, run the risk of breeding any division between such a happy pair: that would be a misfortune for which I should never be consoled.'

Don Alphonso forbade me to take any such resolution; and I saw him so fixed in the design of supporting me, that Lorenza would undoubtedly have met with a rebuff, if I had been minded to oppose her. At certain times, being piqued against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her; but when I came to consider, that in revealing her shame, I should stab the heart of a poor creature whose indisposition I was the occasion of; and that two incurable distempers visibly conducted her to the grave, my resentment was changed into compassion; and I concluded, that since I was such a dangerous mortal, I ought in conscience to re-establish, by my retreat, the tranquillity of the castle. This resolution I executed the very next morning before day, without bidding adieu to my two masters, lest, through friendship for me, they should oppose my departure. I contented myself with leaving in my chamber a writing, wherein was contained an exact account of my administration.

## CHAPTER II

*The fate of Gil Blas, after he quitted the castle of Leyva, and the happy consequences that attended the bad success of his amours*

I WAS mounted on a good horse of my own, with two hundred pistoles in my portmanteau, the best part of which I had got by the banditti whom we slew, and the share of the three thousand ducats which had been stolen from Samuel Simon; for Don Alphonso, without making me restore what I had fingered, had made restitution of the whole sum out of his own pocket. Wherefore, considering my effects as wealth become lawful, I enjoyed it without scruple. I was in possession of a fund therefore, which did not allow me to be much concerned for the future, over and above the confidence which one of my age always has in his own merit: besides, Toledo presented an agreeable asylum; for I did not at all doubt that the Count de Polan would be pleased with an opportunity of obliging one of his deliverers with a kind reception, and an apartment in his house. But this nobleman I looked upon as my last resource, and resolved, before I should apply to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdoms of Murcia and Granada, which I longed particularly to see. With this design, I set out for Almansa, whence continuing my journey, I went from city to city, as far as Granada, without meeting with any bad accident. Fortune, satisfied with having played me so many tricks, seemed willing at length to leave me in quiet: but for all that, she was then hatching a great many more, as will be seen in the sequel. One of the first persons I met in the streets of Granada, was Señor Don Fernando de Leyva, who was, as well as Don Alphonso, son-in-law to the Count de Polan. We were equally surprised at seeing one another in that place. 'Gil Blas (cried he), how come you to be in this city? What business brings

you hither?' 'Señor (said I), if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be much more so, when you hear the cause of my quitting the service of Señor Don Caesar and his son.' Then I recounted all that had passed between Sephora and me, without the least disguise. He laughed heartily at the adventure; then growing serious again, 'Friend (said he), I offer you my mediation in this affair, and will write to my sister-in-law.' 'By no means, Señor (said I, interrupting him), pray don't write; for I did not leave the castle of Leyva with any intention to return. Make, if you please, another use of the regard you have for me; and if any one of your friends has occasion for a secretary or steward, I beg you will speak to him in my favour. I dare assure you, that you shall have no cause to repent of your recommendation.' 'With all my heart (he replied), I will do what you desire: I am come to Granada to visit an old aunt who is sick, and I shall stay here three weeks longer; at the end of which, I shall set out in my return to my castle of Lorqui, where I have left Julia. I lodge here (added he, showing me a house about a hundred yards from us), come and call for me some hours hence; by which time, perhaps, I shall have discovered some suitable post for you.'

And, indeed, at our very next meeting, he said, 'The Archbishop of Granada, my kinsman and friend, wants a young man of letters, possessed of a good hand, to make fair copies of his writings: for he is a great author, has composed a vast number of homilies, and studies more everyday, which he pronounces with applause. As I believe you are such a one as he wants, I proposed you to him, and he has promised to take you into his service. Go, and present yourself to him, in my name; and you may judge, by the reception which you shall receive, whether or not I have spoke in your behalf.'

This was just such a place as I desired: wherefore, having dressed to the best advantage, in order to appear before that prelate, I repaired one morning to

the Archbishop's palace. Here, was I to imitate the authors of romance, I should give a pompous description of this episcopal palace of Granada: I would enlarge upon the structure of the building, extol the richness of the furniture, describe the statues and pictures, and not spare the reader the least tittle of the stories they represented: but I shall content myself with observing, that it equalled the royal palace in magnificence.

I found in the apartments a crowd of ecclesiastics and gentlemen of the sword, the greater part whereof were the officers of his grace: his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and valets de chambre. The laity were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks, and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing, and ridiculing them within myself. 'Egad (said I), these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude, without feeling it; for, in short, if they felt it, I imagine that their behaviour would be less assuming.' Addressing myself to a grave jolly personage, that stood at the door of the Archbishop's closet, in order to open and shut it when there was occasion; I asked civilly, if I could not speak with his grace. 'Wait (said he drily), 'till his grace comes out to go to Mass, and he will give you a moment's audience in passing.' I armed myself with patience, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with some of the officers: but they began to examine me from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable; and then looked at one another, smiling with disdain, at the liberty which I had taken, to mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets; and had scarce recollected myself from the confusion in which I was, when the closet-door opened, and the Archbishop appeared.

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers, who, all of a sudden, laid aside their inso-

lent carriage, and assumed a respectful look in presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty-and-ninth year, pretty much of the make of my uncle the Canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short: he was very much bandy-legged into the bargain, and so bald, that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining on the back part of his head; for which reason, he was obliged to cover his head in a fine woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless, because I knew him to be one. We common people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them an air of greatness which nature has refused.

The Archbishop immediately advancing towards me, asked what I wanted, with a voice full of sweetness; and I told him, that I was the young man of whom Don Fernando de Leyva had spoke to him. He gave me no time to proceed; but cried, 'O! you are the person then of whom he spoke so handsomely. I retain you in my serivce: you are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are.' So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers, after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room, when the same officer who disdained my conversation, now courted it. They surrounded me, and with the utmost complaisance expressed their joy, at seeing me become a household officer at the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained: but I was so malicious as to balk their curiosity, in revenge for their contempt.

His grace returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet, that he might talk with me in private. I concluded, that his design in so doing, was to try my understanding; and, accordingly, kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me, in what is called humanity; and I did not answer amiss: he had occasion to see, that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He

then put me upon logic, where I expected him, and found me quite master of that subject. 'Your education (said he to me, with some surprise) has not been neglected: let us now see your handwriting.' I there upon took out of my pocket a sheet, which I had brought for the purpose; and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my performance. 'I am satisfied with your hand (cried he), and still more with your understanding. I shall thank my nephew Don Fernando for having given me such an able young man, whom I look upon as a real present.'

Being interrupted by the arrival of some noblemen of Granada, who came to dine with the Archbishop, I left them together, and withdrew among the officers, who were quite profuse in their complaisance to me. I went to dinner with them at the usual time; and if they observed me at table, I did not fail to examine them also. What sagacity there is in the exteriors of churchmen! To me they appeared all saints; so much was my mind overawed by the place where I was: and I did not so much as suspect, that there could be any false money in the case; as if no such thing was ever seen among the princes of the Church!

Being seated by an old valet de chambre, whose name was Melchor de la Ronda, he took great care to help me to the choice bits; and this attention which he expressed for me, inspiring me with a respect for him, he was charmed with my polite behaviour. 'Señor Cavalier (said he softly to me, after dinner), I want to have some private conversation with you.' At the same time, he carried me to a part of the palace, where nobody could overhear us; and there talked to me in this manner: 'Son, from the very first moment in which I saw you, I felt an inclination for you: of this I will give you a certain proof, by imparting something which may be of great advantage to you. You are here in a family, where true and false devotees live pell-mell; so that it will be an infinite time before you can, of yourself, be acquainted with the ground. But

I will spare you such a tedious and disagreeable study, by discovering the characters of both; after which, you may the more easily conduct yourself.

'I will begin (added he) with his grace, who is a very pious prelate, incessantly employed in edifying and reforming the people, by sermons of his own composition, full of excellent morals. He quitted the Court about twenty years ago, in order to devote himself entirely to his zeal for his flock. He is a learned man and a great orator, whose sole pleasure consists in preaching, and his hearers are ravished with admiration. Perhaps there is a little vanity in the case: but besides that it does not belong to man to penetrate the heart, it would be ungrateful in me to inquire into the faults of a person whose bread I eat. If I was permitted to disapprove of anything in my master, I would blame his severity. Instead of making an allowance for ecclesiastical foibles, he punishes them with too much rigour: in particular, he persecutes, without mercy, those who, relying on their innocence, attempt to justify themselves in a legal manner, in contempt of his authority. I observe another fault which is common to him with a great many people of quality: although he loves his domestics, he makes no consideration for their services; but lets them grow old, without ever thinking of procuring for them some small settlement. If he gives them gratification sometimes, they owe them solely to the goodness of somebody who has spoken in their behalf: for it would never come into his head to provide for them otherwise.'

This is what the old valet de chambre told me of his master; and he afterwards communicated his thoughts of the clergymen with whom we had dined: pictures which but ill agreed with their external deportment. Indeed he did not represent them as dishonest men, but only as bad priests; excepting some, however, whose virtue he very much extolled. I was no longer at a loss how to regulate my features among those gentlemen: that very evening at supper, I, like them,

assumed a sage aspect; a task that costs nothing: so that we must not wonder that there are so many hypocrites in the world.

## CHAPTER III

*Gil Blas becomes the favourite of the Archbishop, and the channel of his bounty*

I HAD been in the afternoon to fetch my baggage and horse from the inn where I had lodged; after which I returned to supper at the palace, where I found a very handsome chamber, and a down-bed, prepared for me. His grace ordered me to be called early next morning; and gave me a homily to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the joy he expressed was mingled with surprise. 'Good heaven! (cried he in a transport, when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy) was ever anything seen so correct? You transcribe so well, that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingenuously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? Some neglect, perhaps, in the style, or improper term?' 'O, sir (answered I, with an air of modesty), I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded that the works of your grace would escape my censure.' The prelate smiled at my reply; and though he said nothing, discovered, through all his piety, that he was a downright author.

By this kind of flattery, I entirely gained his good graces, became more and more dear to him everyday; and at length understood from Don Fernando, who visited him very often, that I was so much beloved, I might look upon my fortune as already made. This my master himself confirmed to me, a little time after, on the following occasion. One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm,

a homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favourite *morceaux:* by which means I passed, in his judgement, for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. 'This is (cried he) what is called having taste and sentiment! Well, friend, I assure thee thou hast not got Boeotian ears.' In a word, he was so well satisfied with me, that he pronounced with some vivacity, 'Gil Blas, henceforth give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune: I undertake to make it extremely agreeable: I love thee; and, as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant.'

I no sooner heard these words, than I fell at his grace's feet, quite penetrated with gratitude: I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and looked upon myself as a man on the high way to wealth and opulence. 'Yes, my child (resumed the Archbishop whose discourse had been interrupted by my prostration), thou shalt be the repositary of my most secret thoughts. Listen with attention to what I am going to say: my chief pleasure consists in preaching; the Lord gives a blessing to my homilies: they touch the hearts of sinners, make them seriously reflect on their conduct, and have recourse to repentance. I have sometimes the satisfaction to see a miser, terrified by the images which I represent to his avarice, open his treasures, and squander them with a prodigal hand. I have also torn, as it were, the epicurean from his pleasures, filled hermitages with the sons of ambition, and confirmed in her duty the wife who has been shaken by the allurements of a seducing lover. These conversions which are frequent, ought of themselves to excite my study: nevertheless, I will confess my weakness: I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain! I mean the esteem that the world shows for fine polished

writing. The honour of being reckoned a perfect orator has charmed my imagination: my performances are thought equally strong and delicate; but I would, of all things, avoid the fault of good authors who write too long: and retire without forfeiting the least tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas (continued the prelate), one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smack of old age, and my genius flag, don't fail to advertise me of it; for I don't trust to my own judgement, which may be seduced by self-love. That observation must proceed from a disinterested understanding, and I make choice of thine, which I know is good; resolved to stand to thy decision.' 'Thank heaven, sir (said I), that period is far off: besides, a genius like that of your grace will preserve its vigour much better than any other; or, to speak more justly, will be always the same. I look upon you as another Cardinal Ximenes[1], whose superior genius, instead of being weakened by age, seemed to receive new strength from it.' 'No, flattery, friend (said he, interrupting me), I know I am liable to sink all at once: people at my age begin to feel infirmities, and the infirmities of the body often affect the understanding. I repeat it to thee again, Gil Blas, as soon as thou shalt judge mine in the least impaired, be sure to give me notice; and be not afraid of speaking freely and sincerely, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection. Besides, thy interest is concerned; if unhappily for thee, it should come to my ears, that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself; I frankly declare, that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish reserve.'

Here my patron left off speaking, in order to hear my reply; which was, a promise to behave according

[1] Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros, Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo (1436-1517), the political adviser of Ferdinand and Isabella.

to his desire. From that moment he concealed nothing from me, I became his favourite: an event which none of his domestics, except Melchor de la Ronda, could perceive without envy. It was a diverting scene to behold the manner in which the gentlemen and squires then lived with the confidant of his grace: they were not ashamed to be guilty of grovelling meannesses, in order to captivate my goodwill. I could scarce believe they were Spaniards; though I did them good offices, without being the dupe of their selfish complaisance. His grace the Archbishop, at my request, exerted himself in their favour: to one he procured a company, and put him in a condition to make a figure in the army. Another he sent to Mexico, to take possession of a considerable post which he had obtained for him; and my friend Melchor, through my means, enjoyed a handsome gratification. This condescension convinced me, that though the prelate did not anticipate people's desires, he rarely refused any favour that was asked.

But what I did for a certain priest, deserves, in my opinion, to be told: one day a licentiate, whose name was Luis Garcias, a young man of a very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward; who said, 'Señor Gil Blas, this honest clergyman is one of my best friends; he was chaplain of a nunnery; and his virtue has not escaped scandal: some people have done him ill offices with his grace, who has suspended him, and is unhappily so much prejudiced against him, that he will listen to no solicitation in his behalf. We have employed, to no purpose, all the persons of rank in Granada, to beg that he may be re-established; but our master is quite inflexible.'

'Gentlemen (said I), you have gone the wrong way to work; it would have been better for Mr. Licentiate if no solicitation had been made; for in their endeavours to serve him, they have done him a manifest injury. I am well acquainted with his grace; entreaties and recommendations serve only to aggravate, in his opinion, the fault of an ecclesiastic. It was but t'other

day I heard him say to himself, "The more people a priest, who has been guilty of irregularity, engages to speak to me in his behalf, the more is the scandal augmented, and the more severity do I exercise." ' 'That is unfortunate (replied the steward), and my friend would be very much embarrassed, if he was not blessed with a good hand: happily for him, he writes to admiration; and, by the help of that talent, keeps himself out of difficulties.' I was curious to see if this writing, so much extolled, was much better than my own: and the licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, showed me a page that I admired very much; for it looked like a writing-master's copy. While I considered this beautiful performance, a thought coming into my head, I desired Garcias to leave the paper, telling him that I might possibly make some use of it, that would turn out to his advantage; that I could not explain myself at that time, but would next day tell him more of the matter. The licentiate, to whom, in all probability, the steward had made an eulogium of my genius, withdrew as much satisfied, as if he had been already reinstated in his office. I was truly desirous that he might be so; and that same day, laboured for him in the following manner: being alone with the Archbishop, I showed him the writing of Garcias, with which my patron seemed quite charmed: then, laying hold of the opportunity, 'Sir (said I to him), since you won't cause your homilies to be printed, I wish they were at least written in this hand.' 'I am satisfied with thine (answered the prelate), but I own, I should not be sorry to have a copy of my works in that hand.' 'Your grace (I replied) has nothing to do but speak: the man who paints so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance, who will be ravished to do that service for you; the more, because by these means he may interest your goodness, in extricating him from the melancholy situation in which he has the misfortune to be at present.'

The prelate did not fail to ask the name of the licentiate: upon which I said, 'He is called Luis

Garcias, and is in despair on account of having incurred your displeasure.' 'That Garcias (said he, interrupting me) was, if I am not mistaken, chaplain to a convent of nuns, and lies under the censure of the church: I remember some informations that I received against him: his morals are but indifferent.' 'Sir (said I, interrupting him in my turn), I will not undertake to justify him; but I know he has enemies; and pretends, that the authors of those informations which you have seen, were more bent upon doing him ill offices, than on telling the truth.' 'That may be (replied the Archbishop), there are abundance of very dangerous dispositions in this world. Besides, granting that his conduct has not been always irreproachable, he may have repented of his misbehaviour; and in short, there is mercy for every transgression. Bring the licentiate hither, I take off his suspension.'

Thus it is, that the most severe men abate of their severity, when more dear self-interest is concerned. The Archbishop granted, without difficulty, to the vain pleasure of having his works well writ, that which he had refused to the most powerful solicitations. I carried the news immediately to the steward, who imparted them to his friend Garcias, who the very next day, coming to make an acknowledgement of thanks suitable to the favour obtained, I presented him to my master, who contented himself with reprimanding him slightly, and gave him the homilies to transcribe. Garcias acquitted himself so well, that he was re-established in his ministry, and even obtained the living of Gabia, a large market-town in the neighbourhood of Granada.

## CHAPTER IV

*The Archbishop is seized with a fit of the apoplexy. The dilemma in which Gil Blas found himself, and the method he took to be extricated*

While I thus bestowed my services on different people, Don Fernando being about to leave Granada, I visited that nobleman before his departure, in order to thank him anew for the excellent post which he had procured for me. I appeared to him so well satisfied with my condition, that he said, 'My dear Gil Blas, I am ravished to find thee so well pleased with my uncle the Archbishop.' 'I am charmed with him (I replied), and shall never be able to show myself grateful enough for his generosity to me. Nothing less could have consoled me for the loss of Don Caesar and his son.' 'I am persuaded (answered he) that they are both extremely mortified at your absence; but, perhaps, you are not separated for ever: fortune may one day bring you together again.' Melted by these words, I sighed, and found at that instant my love for Don Alphonso so great, that I would have willingly abandoned the Archbishop, with all the agreeable hopes he had given me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle that banished me from it had been removed. Don Fernando perceived the emotions of my soul, which pleased him so much, that he embraced me with affection, and assured me that his whole family would always bear a part in my destiny.

Two months after this gentleman's departure, in the very zenith of my favour, we had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace: the Archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succoured immediately, and such salutary medicines administered, that in a few days his health was re-established: but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse which he composed. I did not, however, find the difference

between this and the rest so sensible, as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag; and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This indeed was quite decisive; sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high or sunk too low: it was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere capucinade[1].

I was not the only person who took notice of this: the greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another, 'This sermon smells strong of the apoplexy.' 'Come, master homily-critic (said I then to myself), prepare to do your office: you see that his grace begins to fail: it is your duty to give him notice of it, not only as the depositary of his thoughts, but likewise, lest some one of his friends should be free enough with him to prevent you: in that case you know what would happen; your name would be erased from his last will, in which there is, doubtless, a better legacy provided for you, than the library of the licentiate Sedillo.'

After these reflections, I made others of a quite contrary nature. To give the notice in question, seemed a delicate point: I imagined that it might be ill received by an author like him, conceited of his own works; but rejecting this suggestion, I represented to myself, that he could not possibly take it amiss, after having exacted it of me in so pressing a manner. Add to this, that I depended upon my being able to mention it with address, and make him swallow the pill without reluctance. In a word, finding that I ran a greater risk in keeping silence than in breaking it, I determined to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now, was how to break the ice. Luckily, the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse.

[1] Littré defines this word in terms uncomplimentary to the Capuchins: 'Plate tirade de morale ou de dévotion.'

I answered, that his homilies were always admired, but, in my opinion, the last had not succeeded so well as the rest, in affecting the audience. 'How, friend! (replied he, with astonishment) has it met with any Aristarchus[1]?' 'No, sir (said I), by no means: such works as yours are not to be criticized; everybody is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you, that your last discourse, in my judgement, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?'

My master grew pale at these words; and said with a forced smile, 'So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?' 'I don't say so, sir (cried I, quite disconcerted): I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works.' 'I understand you (he replied), you think I flag, don't you? Come, be plain: you believe it is time for me to think of retiring.' 'I should not have been so bold (said I) as to speak so freely, if your grace had not commanded me: I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom.' 'God forbid (cried he, with precipitation), God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing, I should be very unjust, I don't at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding.'

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again: but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who had been accustomed to hear himself praised? 'Say no more, my child (said he): you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know, that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove: for my genius (thank heaven)

[1] Aristarchus of Samothrace (*c.* 217-145 B.C.), the initiator of scientific scholarship. Cf. Horace, *De Arte Poetica*, 450.

hath, as yet, lost nothing of its vigour. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go (added he, pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet), go tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may heaven conduct you with that sum. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste.'

## CHAPTER V

*The step that Gil Blas took after the Archbishop had dismissed him. His accidental meeting with the licentiate who had been so much obliged to him: with the gratitude of that priest*

I WENT out of the closet, cursing the caprice, or rather weakness, of the Archbishop, and more enraged against him, than afflicted at the loss of his favour. I even doubted some time, if I should go and draw my hundred ducats; but, after mature deliberation, I was not fool enough to refuse them. I considered, that this money would not deprive me of the right of ridiculing the prelate; in which I was resolved not to be wanting, as often as his homilies should be brought upon the carpet, in my presence.

I went, therefore, and demanded the hundred ducats of the treasurer, without mentioning a single word of what had happened between his master and me; and went afterwards in quest of Melchor de la Ronda, to bid him an eternal adieu. He loved me too much to be insensible of my misfortune, which while I recounted, I perceived that grief was printed on his countenance. In spite of all the respect he owed the Archbishop, he could not help blaming his behaviour. But as I swore in my rage, that the prelate should pay for it, and that I would make the whole town merry at his expense, the sage Melchor said to me, 'Believe me, my dear Gil Blas, you had better suppress your resentment.

People of an inferior rank ought always to respect persons of quality, whatever cause they may have given them to complain. There are, I own, some very mean noblemen, who scarce deserve the least consideration; but as they have the power of doing mischief, they are to be feared.'

I thanked the old valet de chambre for his good advice, which I promised to observe. 'If you go (said he) to Madrid, you must visit Joseph Navarro, my nephew, who is clerk of the kitchen to Señor Don Balthazar de Zúniga, and, I dare say, a young man worthy of your friendship, frank, brisk, obliging, and forward to serve his friends: I wish that he and you may become acquainted.' I answered, that I would not fail to wait on this Joseph Navarro, on my first arrival at Madrid, whither I was determined to go. I then quitted the Archbishop's palace, with an intent never to set foot in it again. If I had still been in possession of my horse, I should have, perhaps, set out immediately for Toledo; but I had sold him while I was in favour, believing that I should have no further occasion for his service. I hired a furnished room, resolving to stay a month at Granada, and then repair to the Count de Polan.

As dinner-time approached, I asked of my landlady if there was not an eating-house in the neighbourhood; and she answering that there was an excellent one a few steps from her house, where there was very good accommodation, and a great deal of company, I made her show me the place, and going thither a little after, was directed into a large hall, which bore some resemblance to a refectory. Ten or twelve fat people at a large table, covered with a dirty cloth, conversing with one another, while every one ate his own little portion. My mess was likewise brought, which, at another time, would, doubtless, have made me regret the table I had lost: but I was then so much piqued against the Archbishop, that the scanty allowance of my eating-house seemed preferable to the good cheer I had enjoyed in his palace. I condemned a variety of dishes, and,

arguing like the doctor of Valladolid,[1] 'Unhappy are those (said I to myself) who frequent such pernicious tables, where one must continually be on his guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading his stomach. Can one eat too little?' In my ill humour, I praised those very aphorisms I had hitherto very much neglected.

While I dispatched my commons, without fear of exceeding the bounds of temperance, the Licentiate Luis Garcias, now become Vicar of Gabia, in the manner already related, came into the hall. He no sooner perceived me, than he came running to salute me with the utmost eagerness, or rather with all the expressions of excessive joy. He hugged me close, and I was obliged to undergo a very long compliment on the service I had done him. He fatigued me with his demonstrations of gratitude. ''Fore gad, my dear patron, since I have had the good fortune to meet you here, we shan't part without a glass; but as there is no good wine in this eating-house, I will carry you, if you please, after our scanty repast, to a place where I will treat you with a bottle of fine dry Luceno, and a glass of fine Muscadine of Foncarral. We must certainly commit that debauch. I wish I had the happiness of enjoying you a few days only, at my patronage of Gabia. There you should be received like a generous Maecenas, to whom I owe the quiet and easy life I lead."

While he talked to me in this manner, his allowance was served, and he went to work, without ceasing, however, to entertain me, at intervals, with something which he thought would flatter my vanity. I laid hold of this opportunity to speak in my turn; and as he did not forget to inquire about his friend the steward, I made no mystery of my leaving the Archbishop's service. I even related to him the most minute circumstances of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After what he had said to me, who would

[1] An allusion to Sangrado's theory: see Book II, Chapter i, Vol. i, p. 90.

not have expected to hear him, penetrated with the most grateful sorrow, exclaim against the Archbishop ? But this was the farthest thing from his thoughts. He grew indifferent and pensive, finished his dinner without speaking a word, then rising suddenly from table, bid me good-bye in a cool manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful wretch, seeing me no longer in a condition to serve him, spared himself even the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I laughed at his ingratitude, and looking at him with all the contempt he deserved, called to him aloud, that I might be heard, 'Holloa ! you sage chaplain of nuns, go and give orders to cool that delicious wine of Luceno, with which you have promised to regale me.'

## CHAPTER VI

*Gil Blas goes to see a play at Grenada. His astonishment at the sight of one of the actresses, and the consequences of that event*

Garcias was no sooner out of the hall than two well-dressed cavaliers came in and sat down by me : they began to talk of the players of the Granada company, and of a new comedy which was then on the stage. This piece, according to their discourse, made a great noise in the city ; and I resolved to go and see it that very day ; for I had not been at a play since my arrival at Granada. As I had almost all that time lived in the Archbishop's palace, where that diversion was anathematized, I had taken care not to indulge that pleasure, but amused myself entirely with my master's homilies.

I repaired, therefore, at the proper time, to the playhouse, where I found a numerous assembly ; overheard, all around me, dissertations on the piece, before it began, and observed that everybody undertook to criticize it. One person declared himself for, another against the performance. 'Was there ever a better work composed ?' said one on my right. 'What a

pitiful style !' cried one on my left. Truly, if there are a good many bad authors, it must be allowed there are still a greater number of wretched critics : and when I consider the mortifications that dramatic poets must undergo, I am astonished that there are any so bold as to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of witlings, who sometimes corrupt the judgement of the public.

At length the *gracioso*[1] presented himself to open the scene. He was saluted, on his first appearance, with a general clap ; by which I perceived that he was one of those spoiled actors, in whom the pit pardons everything. And, indeed, this player did not speak one word, nor perform one gesture, without attracting applause. The audience made him too sensible of the pleasure they had in seeing him on the stage ; and he abused their favour accordingly. I perceived that he sometimes forgot himself in the middle of a scene, and put their prepossession in his behalf to too severe a proof ; for they would often have done him justice had they hissed instead of extolled him to the skies.

There was likewise a clapping of hands at the appearance of some other actors, and in particular of an actress who performed the part of a waiting-woman, whom, having considered with attention, no terms can express my surprise when I recollected in her the person of Laura, my dear Laura ! whom I still believed to be in the service of Arsenia at Madrid. I could not doubt that it was she ; her shape, her features, the sound of her voice, everything assured me that I was not mistaken. Nevertheless, as if I had mistrusted the evidence of my eyes and ears, I asked her name of a cavalier, who sat by me. ' Hey ! (said he) from whence

[1] The typical comic personage—the *figura del donayre* —of the Spanish stage. This character in its complete form was first introduced by Lope de Vega in *La Francesilla*, a play which dates from 1599, or earlier : see Hugo Albert Rennert, *The Life of Lope de Vega* (Glasgow, 1904), 386 *n.*

come you ? It seems you are just arrived, since you don't know the fair Estella.'

The resemblance was too perfect for me to be deceived by this disguise: I could easily conceive that Laura, when she changed her condition, had also altered her name ; and curious to know her situation—for the public is generally pretty well acquainted with the affairs of persons in her sphere—I begged to know of the same man if this Estella had not some gallant of importance. He answered that a Portuguese nobleman, called the Marquis de Marialva, who had been about two months at Granada, was at a considerable expense on her account. He might have told me a great deal more, if I had not been afraid of fatiguing him with questions. I was more engrossed by the news which this cavalier had told me than by the representation of the play ; and if anybody had asked the subject of the piece, when I came out, he would have embarrassed me not a little. I did nothing but muse upon Laura, or Estella, and firmly resolved to go and visit her next day ; though I was not without anxiety about the reception I should meet with. I had reason to believe that the sight of me would not yield her much pleasure in this brilliant situation of her affairs ; nay, I imagined that such a good actress, in order to revenge herself upon one with whom she had certainly cause to be dissatisfied would probably disclaim his acquaintance. All this did not dissuade me from my design of going. After a slight repast (for such only my eating-house afforded), I went home to my lodging, where I waited impatiently for next day.

I slept little that night, and got up before the sun ; but, as I concluded that a nobleman's mistress would not be visible so early, I spent three or four hours in dressing, shaving, powdering, and perfuming ; resolving to present myself before her in such a condition as would give her no cause to blush at seeing me again. I sallied out about ten o'clock, and repaired to her lodging, to which I received a direction, at the house

where the players lived. She possessed the chief apartment of a large house; the door of which being opened to me by a chambermaid, I told her that I wanted to speak with Dame Estella. The maid went in to signify my desire, and I immediately heard her mistress pronounce, with a loud voice, 'Who is this young man? what does he want? Let him come in.' By this I concluded that I had chosen an unseasonable time for my visit, that her Portuguese lover was present at her toilet, and that her reason for speaking so loud was to persuade him that she never received suspected messages. My conjecture was true; the Marquis de Marialva commonly passed the morning in her company; and I expected a very disagreeable compliment, when this truly original actress seeing me appear, ran to me with open arms, crying, 'Ah! my dear brother! is it you?' And, with these words, embraced me several times. Then turning to her gallant, 'My lord (said she), pardon me in yielding to the force of blood in your presence. After an absence of three years, I cannot behold a brother, whom I tenderly love, without giving him some marks of my affection. Well, my dear Gil Blas (continued she, addressing me anew), tell me some news of my family: in what condition did you leave it?'

This question embarrassed me at first; but I soon discovered Laura's intention, and seconding her artifice, answered, with an air suited to the scene we had to act, 'Thank heaven, sister, our parents are in good health.' 'I don't doubt (she replied) that you are astonished to find me an actress at Granada; but do not condemn me unheard. Three years ago, as you remember, my father thought he had settled me to advantage, by giving me in marriage to Captain Don Antonio Coello, who carried me from Asturias to Madrid, where he was born. Six months after our arrival in that city, having had an affair of honour brought upon him by his own violent humour, he killed a cavalier, who had taken it into his head to favour me with some attention. This gentleman being related to persons of great

quality and credit, my husband, who had no interest, fled into Catalonia, with all the money and jewels he could find in the house; embarked at Barcelona, crossed into Italy, engaged in the service of the Venetians, and at last lost his life in the Morea, fighting against the Turks[1]. In the meantime our landed estate was confiscated, and I had but a very small jointure left. What could I do in such a troublesome extremity? I could not return to Asturias: for what purpose go thither? All the consolation I should have received from my family would have been no more than sympathy and condolence. On the other hand, I had been too well educated to be capable of embracing a life of libertinism. Upon what determination then could I fix? I have turned actress to preserve my character.'

The Marquis de Marialva, who lost not a word of the whole discourse, implicitly believed every syllable of what Don Antonio's widow was pleased to utter. He even joined in the conversation, and asked if I was in any business at Granada or elsewhere. I was in some doubt, at that instant, whether or no I should tell a lie; but thinking that unnecessary, I spoke truth, recounting every circumstance of my entering into, and quitting the Archbishop's service; which afforded infinite diversion to the Portuguese nobleman. It is true, that notwithstanding my promise to Melchor, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his grace. But the most diverting part of the scene was, that Laura, who thought I invented a story in imitation of her, burst out into loud fits of laughter, which she would have probably spared, had she known that I did not dissemble.

Having ended my narration, which I finished with the lodging I had hired, word was brought that dinner was on the table. Upon which I would have retired, in order to go and dine at my eating-house; but Laura, stopping me, said, 'What do you mean, brother? you shall dine with me: and I won't even

[1] This expedition took place in 1684.

suffer you to live any longer in a hired room; for I intend you shall both eat and lodge in my house. Order your baggage to be brought hither this evening, I have a bed to spare.'

The Portuguese nobleman, who, perhaps, was not very well pleased with this hospitality, addressing himself to Laura, said, 'No, Estella, you have no convenience for him in these lodgings. Your brother seems to be a pretty young fellow; and the advantage he has in being so dear to you, interests me in his favour. I will take him into my service: he shall be my favourite secretary, and chief confidant. Let him not fail to come and sleep at my house this very night; for I will order an apartment to be prepared for the purpose. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats; and if, in the sequel, I have cause, as I hope I shall, to be satisfied with his behaviour, I will put him in a condition to console himself for being too sincere with the Archbishop.'

The acknowledgements which I made to the Marquis at this juncture, were followed by those of Laura, who improved upon mine. So saying, he saluted his theatrical princess, and went away. She led me immediately into a closet, where seeing herself alone with me, 'I should burst (cried she), if I was obliged to resist any longer the inclination I have to laugh.' Then throwing herself into an easy chair, and holding her sides, she laughed immoderately, as if she had lost her senses. I found it impossible not to follow her example, and when we had indulged ourselves sufficiently, 'Confess, Gil Blas (said she), that we have acted a pleasant farce: but I did not expect such a catastrophe; my design being no other than to provide for you a table and lodging in my house; which, that I might offer with decency, I made thee pass for my brother. I am ravished that such a good post has occurred to thee by accident. The Marquis de Marialva is a generous nobleman, who will even exceed his promise in thy favour. Another (added she) might not, perhaps, have given such a gracious

reception to one who quits his friends without bidding them farewell; but I am one of those good creatures, who cannot help seeing again, with pleasure, a rogue whom they have once loved.' I candidly acknowledged my impolite behaviour, for which I asked pardon. She then conducted me into a very handsome dining-room, where we sat down at table, and, as a waiting-woman and lackey were present, behaved to one another like brother and sister.

Having dined, we went back to the same closet where we had conversed together before. There my incomparable Laura, giving a loose to all her natural gaiety, demanded an account of all my adventures since our separation. I made a faithful recital of the whole; and when I had gratified her curiosity, she gave me the same satisfaction, in recounting the following history of herself.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The history of Laura*

I AM going to relate, as succinctly as I can, by what accident I embraced the profession of a player.

Great events happened after you left me in such an honourable manner. My mistress Arsenia, rather tired than disgusted with the world, renounced the stage, and carried me with her to a fine estate which she had bought near Zamora, with the price of her favours. In this city we soon contracted acquaintance, and going thither, frequently, to pass a day or two, came back again, and shut ourselves up in our castle.

In one of these small journeys, Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, saw me by accident, and happening to be pleased with my appearance, sought an opportunity of speaking with me in private, which, that I may conceal nothing from thee, I own, was facilitated by myself. He was a cavalier not yet

twenty years old, fair as love himself, a mere pattern in shape, and still more engaging by his gallant and generous behaviour, than by his person: for he made me an offer of a large brilliant, which he had on his finger, with such a good grace, and pressing entreaties, that I could not, for my soul, refuse it. I did not possess such an amiable gallant with indifference. But what madness is it in Abigails, to attach themselves to the young heirs of persons in authority! his father, the most severe of all corregidors, informed of our intelligence, made haste to prevent the consequences of it, and ordered me to be apprehended by a troop of alguazils, who carried me, regardless of my cries, to the hospital of compassion[1]. There, without any other form of process, the superior ordered me to be stripped of my ring and dress, and clothed with a long gown of grey serge, girded about me with a strap of black leather, from whence a rosary of large beads hung down to my heels. This being performed, I was conducted into a hall, where I found an old monk, of an order that I did not know, who fell a preaching penitence to me, much in the same manner as Dame Leonarda exhorted thee to patience in the cavern. He told me that I was very much obliged to those who caused me to be shut up in that place, for they had done me infinite service, in rescuing me from the snares of the devil. I will frankly own my ingratitude: far from thinking myself beholden to those who had done me that good office, I loaded them with imprecations.

Eight days I passed in afflicting myself; but on the ninth (for I counted the very minutes), my fate seemed to bear another aspect. Crossing a small court, I met the steward of our house, a person who ruled with unlimited sway; the superior herself was under his command; and he rendered an account of his stewardship to none but the corregidor, on whom, alone, he depended, and whose entire confidence he

[1] Or rather, as the translator explains in a note, 'the house of correction.'

enjoyed. His name was Pedro Zendono ; he was born in the town of Salsedon, in Biscay, being a tall, pale, meagre man, whose figure would have served as an excellent pattern for the picture of a rank rogue. He scarce seemed to look at the sisters ; and, in short, thou never sawest such a hypocritical face, although thou hast lived in an Archbishop's palace.

Well then (said she), I met this Señor Zendono, who stopped me, saying, 'Daughter, be comforted, I am touched with your misfortune.' He said no more, but went about his business, leaving me to make what commentaries I pleased on such a laconic text. As I believed him to be a good man, I innocently concluded, that he had taken the trouble of examining into the cause of my confinement, and finding me not guilty enough to deserve such unworthy treatment, was resolved to do me a good office with the corregidor. I was little acquainted with the Biscayan, who had quite other intentions. He then revolved in his mind the scheme of a journey, which he imparted to me, a few days after. 'My dear Laura (said he), I am so much affected with your sufferings, that I am resolved to put an end to them immediately. In so doing, I know I shall embrace my own ruin ; but I am no longer master of myself. I intend to take you out of prison to-morrow, and conduct you in person to Madrid ; being resolved to sacrifice everything to the pleasure of being your deliverer.'

I was ready to swoon with joy, at these words of Zendono, who judging, by my acknowledgements, that I longed for nothing so much as liberty, had the impudence to carry me off next day, in sight of everybody, by the following stratagem. He told the superior, that he had orders to bring me to the corregidor, who was at a pleasure-house two leagues from town ; and, with the utmost assurance, made me get into a post-chaise with him, drawn by two good mules, which he had bought for the purpose, and attended by no other servants than a valet, who conducted the chaise, and was entirely devoted to the steward,

we set out, not for Madrid, as I imagined, but toward the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived, before the corregidor of Zamora could get notice of our flight, and send the beagles of justice in pursuit of us.

Before we entered Braganza, the Biscayan made me put on a suit of men's clothes, which he had the precaution to provide; and now looking upon me as fairly embarked with him, said to me, at the inn where we lodged, 'Fair Laura, be not offended with me, for bringing you into Portugal: for, the corregidor of Zamora will make search for us in our native country, as two criminals, to whom Spain ought not to afford a retreat. But (added he) we can shelter ourselves from his resentment in this foreign kingdom, although it be, at present, under the dominion of the Spanish monarchy[1]. Here we shall, at least, be more secure than in our own country. Follow, therefore, a man who adores you; and let us settle at Coimbra, where I will become a spy for the Holy Office, and under the shade of that formidable tribunal, our days will smoothly glide in ease and pleasure.'

Such a forward proposal gave me to understand, that I had to do with a cavalier, who did not choose to redress the grievances of damsels, merely for the

[1] Lesage here states quite correctly that Portugal was annexed to Spain during the period assigned to Laura's adventures. This is incompatible with the references to the King of Portugal in Don Pompeio de Castro's story (Book III, Chapter vii., Vol. i., pp. 196-203). The author himself perceived the mistake after publication, and blandly apologized for it in a preliminary note to his third volume (1724):

'A period has been observed in this third volume which does not agree with the story of Don Pompeio de Castro in the first volume. It there appears that Philip II has not yet conquered Portugal; and here this kingdom is suddenly seen under the dominion of Philip III, though Gil Blas is not much older. This is a chronological error which the author noticed when too late, but which he promises to correct presently, with many others, if a new edition of his work be issued.'

glory of knight-errantry. I perceived that he depended a good deal upon my gratitude, and still more upon my distress. Nevertheless, though these two considerations spoke to me in his behalf, I rejected his proposal with disdain. 'Tis true, indeed, I had two strong reasons for showing myself so reserved: I disliked his person, and distrusted his circumstances. But, when returning to the charge, he offered to wed me, as a preliminary, and showed me that his stewardship had put him in a condition to enjoy himself for a long time, I won't deny that I began to listen to his addresses. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels, which he spread before me, and found, by experience, that as many metamorphoses are made by interest as by love. My Biscayan became, gradually, quite another man in my eyes: his tall, withered carcass assumed the form of a fine shape; his pale complexion seemed agreeably fair; and I gave a favourable appellation to his hypocritical look. I then accepted his hand, without reluctance, in the face of heaven, which he called to witness our engagement. After this, he suffered no contradiction on my part; we set out again on our travels, and, in a short time, Coimbra beheld a new family within its walls.

My husband purchased for me some handsome clothes adapted to my own sex, and presented me with several diamonds, among which I recollected that of Don Felix Maldonado. This discovery was sufficient to make me conceive how all the jewels I had seen were acquired, and to persuade me that I had not married a scrupulous observer of the seventh article of the decalogue[1]. But, considering myself as the first cause of his dexterity, I forgave him in my heart: for a woman will excuse even the bad actions which her beauty prompts the men to commit; otherwise, I should have thought him an execrable villain.

I was pretty well satisfied with him, for two or three

[1] The 'seventh article of the decalogue' in the Roman Catholic arrangement corresponds to the eighth commandment in the Authorized Version of the Bible.

months, during which he behaved in a gallant manner, and seemed to love me with great tenderness: nevertheless, these marks of affection were false appearances; for the rogue cheated me at last. One morning, on my return from Mass, I found nothing at home but bare walls: the whole furniture, with all my baggage, was carried off: Zendono, and his faithful valet, had taken their measures so well, that in less than an hour, the general pillage of the house had been begun and finished, in such a manner, that with the clothes only which I had on my back, and the ring of Don Felix, which was luckily on my finger, I saw myself abandoned by an ungrateful wretch, like another Ariadne. But, I assure thee, I did not amuse myself with making elegies on my misfortunes, I rather thanked heaven for having delivered me from such a wretch, who could not fail, soon or late, to fall into the hands of justice; and looked upon the days we had spent together, as so much lost time, for which I would soon make myself amends. Had I been desirous of staying in Portugal, and attaching myself to some lady of fashion, I should not have wanted a place; but, whether I loved my own country, or was influenced by the force of destiny, which prepared a better fortune for me here, I resolved to return to Spain; and applying to a jeweller, who gave me ready money for my ring, set out with an old Spanish lady, who was going in a chaise to Seville.

This person, whose name was Dorothea, had been to visit one of her relations settled at Coimbra, and was on her return to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between her disposition and mine, that we became friends the very first day of our journey; and our mutual affection grew so strong on the road, that, on our arrival, the lady would suffer me to lodge nowhere but in her house. I had no cause to repent of my acquaintance; for I never knew a woman of a better character; and one might still perceive, by her features, and the sparkling of her eyes, that in her youth many a guitar had been thrummed

on her account: indeed, she was the widow of several noble husbands, and lived in an honourable manner, on the jointures which she enjoyed.

Among other excellent qualities, she had that of being very compassionate to unfortunate young women. When I imparted to her my own story, she entered warmly into my interests, and bestowed a thousand curses on Zendono. 'What dogs these men are! (said she, in a tone that made me guess she had met with some steward in her way) perfidious wretches! I know there are such villains in the world, who divert themselves in deceiving women. What I am pleased at, my dear child (added she), is, that, according to your relation, you are no longer bound to that perjured Biscayan: if your marriage with him was good enough to secure your reputation; by way of recompense, it is also bad enough to permit you to contract a better, whenever you can find an opportunity.'

I went abroad every day with Dorothea, either to church, or to visit; and this being the way to meet with some adventure soon, I attracted the notice of several cavaliers, who, in order to sound the business, made interest with my old landlady: but some had not wherewithal to make a good settlement, and others were still minors; so that I had not the least desire of listening to any of them. One day, Dorothea and I took a whim of going to see a play at Seville; and upon consulting the bill, we found that the players intended to act, *La Famosa Comedia, El Embaxador de sí mismo*, composed by Lope de Vega Carpio[1].

Among the actresses who appeared on the stage, I discovered my old friend Phenicia, that jolly merry wench whom thou hast seen, when she was waiting-maid to Florimonda, and with whom thou hast sometimes supped at Arsenia's house. I knew that she had not been in Madrid for two years before, but was

[1] No play of this title is known to exist. Possibly Lesage may have meant *El Embajador fingido*: see Hugo Albert, Rennert, *Life of Lope de Vega* (Glasgow, 1904), 491, 506.

ignorant of her being an actress. Having an eager desire of embracing her, I found the piece very tedious: but this might be the fault of the actors, who played either too ill or too well to yield me amusement; for as to me, who am a merry creature, I own myself as much diverted by a player who is perfectly ridiculous, as by one who is excellent in his way.

At length, the moment I waited for being arrived, that is, the end of *La Famosa Comedia*, my widow and I went behind the scenes, where we perceived Phenicia acting the coquette, and listening with affectation to the soft warbling of a young bird, which, it seems, had allowed itself to be ensnared by her declamation. She no sooner observed me, than quitting her admirer with a courteous air, she came towards me with open arms, and loaded me with caresses. We expressed our mutual joy in seeing one another again; but the time and place not permitting us to launch out into a long conversation, we deferred it till next day, when we might discourse together more fully at her lodgings.

The itch of talking is one of the most eager passions of women: I could not close an eye the whole night, so much did I long to engage Phenicia, and worry her with questions upon questions. God knows, I was not lazy in getting up, to repair to her lodging, according to the direction she had given me. She lived with the whole company in a large hired house; which when I entered, I met a maid-servant, who, when I desired her to conduct me to Phenicia's apartment, showed me up to a gallery, on one side of which were ten or twelve small chambers, divided from one another by partitions of deal boards only, and possessed by the joyous band. My guide knocked at a door, which Phenicia, whose tongue itched as well as mine, came and opened. Scarce did we allow ourselves time to sit, before we began to chatter. We had a severe brush, and uttered in our turns so many interrogations, that the questions and replies succeeded one another with surprising volubility.

After having recounted our mutual adventures, and

reciprocally informed ourselves of the state of our affairs, Phenicia asked what I intended to do: I answered, that I was resolved (until something better should cast up) to enter into the service of some young lady of quality. 'O fie! (cried my friend) you joke, sure! Is it possible, my dear, that thou art not yet disgusted with servitude? Art thou not tired with seeing thyself subjected to another's will, with humouring the caprices of a mistress, with hearing thyself reproached, and in one word, with being a slave? Why wilt thou not, by my example, embrace a theatrical life? Nothing can be more convenient for people of spirit who have neither birth nor fortune; it is a situation that holds the middle place between the nobility and citizens; an unrestricted condition, free of that decorum which is so troublesome to society. Our revenues are paid in ready cash by the public, which is our bank; we live in continual mirth, and spend our money as we get it.

'The stage (added she) is particularly favourable to women: while I lived with Florimonda (I blush at the remembrance of it), I was reduced to the necessity of listening to the candle-snuffers of the Prince's company; not one man of fashion paid the least attention to my figure. What was the cause of this unimportance? I was not seen: the finest picture has not its effect, except in a particular light; but since I have been placed on my proper pedestal, that is, on the stage, heavens, what a change has happened! I see at my heels the gayest youth of all those towns through which we pass. An actress therefore enjoys a great deal of pleasure in her occupation: if she is prudent, I mean, if she favours one gallant only at a time, she has all the honour imaginable paid to her, her chastity is applauded, and when she changes her lover, she is looked upon as a real widow who marries a second husband; nay, if a widow takes a third, she is spoken of with contempt, and said to have infringed the delicacy of her sex: whereas the actress seems to be more and more regarded, in proportion to the increase

of her admirers. After she has gone through a hundred intrigues, she is still a morsel for a lord.'

'To whom do you talk in this manner? (said I, interrupting her). Do you think I am ignorant of these advantages? I have often reflected on them, and they but too much flatter the imagination of such a girl as me: I even feel an inclination for the stage; but that alone is not sufficient; talent is absolutely necessary, and I have none: for when I sometimes attempted to repeat passages of plays before Arsenia, she always found fault with my performance; so that I was disgusted at the profession.' 'Thou art easily discouraged (replied Phenicia). Dost thou not know that those great actresses are commonly jealous? They are afraid (in spite of all their vanity) of being eclipsed. In short, I won't take Arsenia's word for thy incapacity; for she was certainly insincere: nay, I assure thee, without flattery, that thou art born for the stage; thou hast genius, a free and graceful carriage, a sweet voice, a good chest, and withal a face! Ah, baggage, how many cavaliers wilt thou charm, if thou turnest actress!'

She plied me with more such seducing discourse, and made me pronounce some verses, that I myself might judge of my capacity for acting: but when she heard me, it was quite another case; she overwhelmed me with applause, and preferred me to all the actresses in Madrid. After this, I should have been inexcusable, had I doubted my own merit. Arsenia stood impeached, and convicted of envy and insincerity; and I could not help allowing that I was an admirable subject. Two actors, who happened to come in at that instant, and before whom Phenicia obliged me to repeat the verses which I had already recited to her, were seized with a kind of ecstasy; from which they no sooner recollected themselves, than they loaded me with praise. In good earnest, had the three wagered with one another which of them should applaud me most, they could not have employed more hyperbolical expressions. My modesty was not proof against such

eulogiums: I began to believe myself of some value; and thus my thoughts were turned towards the stage.

'Come on, then, my dear (said I to Phenicia), the affair is determined: I will follow thy advice, and enter in the company, provided they think well of it.' My friend, transported with joy at these words, hugged me in her arms; and her two comrades seemed no less delighted to find me in these sentiments. We agreed that next day I should repair to the theatre in the morning, and before the whole company assembled show the same sample of my talent that I had exhibited to them. If I had acquired the good opinion of those who were at Phenicia's lodgings, all the actors judged of me still more favourably when I had pronounced about twenty verses in their presence. They received me very willingly into their company; and then I was wholly engrossed by my first appearance, which, that I might render as gay as possible, I employed upon it all the money that remained from the sale of my ring; and though I had not enough to make a superb figure, I at least found means to supply the want of magnificence by a genteel taste in my dress.

At length I appeared on the stage for the first time; and then, what thundering applause, what eulogiums was I favoured with! It is downright modesty, my friend, to say simply that I ravished the audience; one must have been witness of the noise I made at Seville to believe it. I became the discourse of the whole city, which, during three weeks, came in crowds to the play-house in such a manner, that the company, by this novelty, recalled the public, which had begun to desert them. I began then in a manner that charmed everybody; and this was the same thing as if I had advertised myself to be let to the highest bidder. Twenty cavaliers, of all ages, outvied one another in their proffers to me; and if I had followed my own inclination, I would have chosen him who was young and handsome: but people of our stamp ought to consult nothing but their interest and ambition, when a settlement is depending. For this reason, Don Am-

brosio de Nisana, a man already old and ugly, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen of Andalusia, had the preference. True, indeed, I made him purchase my favours at a good price; he hired for me a grand house, which he furnished in a very magnificent manner, gave me an expert cook, two lackeys, a chambermaid, and a thousand ducats for my monthly expense, over and above rich clothes and a pretty large quantity of jewels.

What a change was this in my fortune! My reason could not support it; I appeared to myself all of a sudden quite another person; and I am not surprised that there are girls who forget in a little time the meanness and misery from which they are rescued by the caprice of a man of quality. I will make a sincere confession; the applause of the public, the flattering discourse that I heard from all quarters, and the passion of Don Ambrosio, inspired me with sentiments of vanity that amounted to mere extravagance. I considered my talent as a patent of nobility; I assumed the airs of a woman of quality; and becoming as covetous as I had before been prodigal of my smiles, resolved to limit my prospect to dukes, counts, and marquises only.

Señor de Nisana came to sup at my house every evening with some of his friends; and I, on my side, took care to invite the most engaging of our actresses: so that we commonly spent the best part of the night in drinking and making merry. I accommodated myself mighty well to such an agreeable life, which, however, lasted but six months. Noblemen are apt to change, otherwise they would be too amiable. Don Ambrosio forsook me, for a conquest he had made of a young creature from Granada, who had arrived at Seville with some charms, and the talent of disposing them to the best advantage. My affliction at his inconstancy did not last, however, longer than four-and-twenty hours. I chose in his room a cavalier of two-and-twenty, called Don Luis de Alcacer[1], to whom,

[1] *Alcacer*=green corn.

in point of person, few Spaniards could be compared. Thou wilt, doubtless, ask, and thou hast reason so to do, why I took such a young nobleman for my gallant, when I knew the consequences of such a choice. But, besides that Don Luis had neither father nor mother, and already enjoyed his estate, I must tell thee that these consequences are not to be dreaded but by girls of a servile condition, or unhappy she-adventurers. Women of our profession are privileged persons, and not at all answerable for the effects that our charms produce. So much the worse for those families whose heirs we pillage.

Alcacer and I attached ourselves so strongly to one another, that no mutual passion, I believe, ever equalled that with which we were inflamed. We loved with so much fury, that one would have thought we were both enchanted: and those who were acquainted with our correspondence believed us the most happy lovers in the world; though we were, in reality, the most miserable. If Don Luis had a person altogether amiable, he was at the same time so jealous, that he afflicted me incessantly with unjust suspicions. It was in vain for me to accommodate myself to this weakness, to constrain myself so far as not to look upon a man. His distrust, ingenious in finding out crimes to lay to my charge, rendered my caution altogether useless. Our most tender moments were always disturbed by quarrels, which it was impossible to endure. Both of us lost our patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Wouldst thou believe it? we looked upon the last day as the most charming of our commerce. Equally fatigued with the troubles we had undergone, we expressed the utmost joy in our mutual adieu. We were like two miserable captives, who, after a rude slavery, at last recover their freedom.

Since that adventure, I am always on my guard against love. I will no more contract attachments that may disturb my repose: it does not become those of our profession to sigh like other people; and we ought not to entertain in private a passion, the ridicule of which we represent in public.

About this time, I afforded some employment to fame, which reported everywhere that I was an inimitable actress. On the assurance of this goddess, the players of Granada wrote to me, proposing that I should enter into their company; and to let me know that the proposal was not to be rejected, sent me an account of their daily expense, and the terms of their offer: from which I concluded that it would be for my interest to comply. I accepted it, therefore; though, at bottom, I was grieved at parting from Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman is capable of loving others of her sex. I left the first busy in melting the plate of a little merchant goldsmith, who, out of vanity, would have an actress for his mistress. I forgot to tell thee that when I devoted myself to the stage, I changed, through whim, my name from Laura into that of Estella, under which appellation I set out for Granada.

Here my first appearance was no less lucky than at Seville, and I saw myself at once surrounded by admirers: but being resolved to favour none except in an honourable way, I behaved to them with so much reserve, that they were blinded by my affected modesty. Nevertheless, that I might not be the dupe of a conduct that would be of no service, and which indeed was not natural to me, I was going to listen to a young judge of the citizen race, who assumes the nobleman by virtue of his office, a sumptuous table and rich equipage, when I saw, for the first time, the Marquis de Marialva. This Portuguese lord, who travels through Spain out of curiosity, stopped on his way at Granada; and coming to the play one night, when I did not act, considered with great attention the actresses who presented themselves, and found one to his liking. He made an acquaintance with her the very next day, and was ready to conclude the bargain, when I appeared on the stage. My figure, and the airs I gave myself, turned the weathercock all of a sudden; and my Portuguese attached himself to me only. To confess the truth, as I was not ignorant that my comrade had

pleased that nobleman, I spared nothing to deprive her of her conquest; and I had the good fortune to accomplish it. I know that she bears me a grudge for my success, but I could not help doing it; and she ought to consider, it is a thing so natural to women, that the best friends make no scruple of practising it on one another.

## CHAPTER VIII

*The reception which Gil Blas met with from the players of Granada, and his finding an old acquaintance behind the scenes*

Laura had no sooner finished her story, than an old actress, who lived in the neighbourhood, came to take her up in her way to the play-house. This venerable stage-heroine would have been very proper for playing the part of the goddess Cotys[1]. My sister did not fail to present her brother to this superannuated figure; upon which, a great many compliments passed on both sides.

I left them together, telling the steward's widow that I would rejoin her at the theatre, as soon as I ordered my baggage to be carried to the Marquis de Marialva's house, to which he gave me a direction. I went immediately to my own room; from whence, after having satisfied my landlady, I repaired with a man who carried my portmanteau, to a large furnished house where my new master lodged. I met at the door his steward, who asked me if I was not Dame Estella's brother; and upon my answering in the affirmative, said, 'Señor Cavalier, you are very welcome: the Marquis de Marialva, whose steward I have the honour to be, has ordered me to give you a handsome reception. There is a chamber prepared for you; to which, if you please, I will show you the way.' So saying, he carried

[1] The Thracian equivalent of Cybele: for the Cotyttia, see Horace, *Epode*, 56-59.

me to the top of the house, and showed me into a chamber so small, that a very narrow bed, a chest, and two chairs quite filled it. This was my apartment. 'You won't be very much at large in this place (said my guide); but to make you amends, you shall be lodged in a superb manner at Lisbon.' I locked my portmanteau in my chest, put the key in my pocket, and asked at what hour they supped. It was answered, that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but gave a certain monthly sum to each domestic for his board. I put other questions to him, and learned that the people belonging to the Marquis were a parcel of happy sluggards. After a short conversation, I left the steward, to go in quest of Laura, agreeably engrossed with the presage I had conceived of my new place.

As soon as I arrived at the play-house door, and said that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You might have seen the guards as eager in making a passage for me, as if I had been one of the most considerable noblemen of Granada. All the servants and door-keepers whom I met made me profound bows. But what I wish I could paint to the reader was my serio-comical reception behind the scenes, where I found the company all dressed, and ready to begin. The actors and actresses to whom Laura presented me poured upon me in shoals. The men overwhelmed me with embraces; and the women, in their turns, applying their painted faces to mine, covered it with white and red. Each desirous of being the first to make their compliment, they all spoke at the same time: it was impossible for me to answer, but my sister came to my assistance, and her indefatigable tongue did not leave me in debt to anyone.

The embraces of the actors and actresses did not suffice; for I was also obliged to undergo the civilities of the scene-painter, the music, prompter, candle-snuffer and his deputy; in short, of all the servants of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to behold me. One would have thought that

all these people were foundlings, who never had seen a brother before.

Meanwhile, the performance began; and some gentlemen, who were behind the scenes, ran to their places; while I, like a child of the house, continued to converse with those of the actors who were not on the stage. Among these, I heard one called Melchor: I was struck with the name; I considered with attention the person who bore it, and imagined I had seen him somewhere. I at length recollected him to be Melchor Zapata, that poor stroller, who, as I have observed in the first volume of my history[1], soaked crusts of bread in a spring.

Taking him aside accordingly. 'I am mistaken (said I) if you are not that Señor Melchor, with whom I had the honour to breakfast one day, at the side of a clear spring between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in company with a journeyman barber; we had some provisions in a knapsack, which being joined to yours, made up a pretty little repast, which was seasoned with a thousand agreeable sallies.' Zapata having mused some minutes, answered, 'You mention a circumstance which I recall without difficulty: I was then returning to Zamora, from having made an unsuccessful attempt on the stage at Madrid: I remember, too, that I was in very bad circumstances.' 'I remember the same thing (said I) by this token, that you wore a jacket lined with play-bills. You see I have not forgot it, no more than that you complained at that time of having too chaste a wife.' 'Oh! I have no cause to complain of that at present (said Zapata with precipitation), egad! my gossip is very much reformed in that particular; and therefore my jacket is better lined than formerly.'

I was going to congratulate him on his wife's reformation, when he was obliged to leave me, in order to appear upon the stage. Curious to know his spouse, I made up to an actor, and desired he would show her to me. This he did, saying, 'There she is; that is

[1] See Book II, Chapter viii., Vol. i., pp. 145-147.

Narcissa, the handsomest of our ladies, your sister excepted.' I immediately concluded, that this actress must be she in favour of whom the Marquis de Marialva had declared himself, before he had seen Estella; and my conjecture was but too true. When the play was over, I conducted Laura to her lodging, where I perceived several cooks preparing a great entertainment. 'Thou mayst sup here' (said she). 'I won't indeed (said I), the Marquis, perhaps, will choose to be alone with you.' 'O! not at all (she replied), he is to be here with two of his friends and one of our gentlemen; and it is in thy own option to make the sixth. Thou knowest that, in the houses of actresses, secretaries have the privilege of eating with their masters.' 'True, (said I), but it would be a little too early for me to put myself on the footing of a favourite secretary. I must first enjoy his confidence, before I can merit that honourable privilege.' So saying, I left her, and repaired to my eating-house, which I intended to frequent everyday, since my master kept no table at home.

## CHAPTER IX

*He supped that evening with an extraordinary man: an account of what happened between them*

I OBSERVED in the hall a kind of old monk clothed in coarse grey cloth, who was at supper all alone in a corner. Sitting down out of curiosity just opposite to him, I saluted him very civilly, and he showed himself no less polite. My pittance being brought, I began to dispatch it with a good deal of appetite; and while I ate in silence, I frequently looked at this person, whose eyes I always found fixed on mine. Fatigued with his stubborn perseverance in looking at me, I addressed him in these words: 'Father, have we ever seen one another before? You observe me, as if I was not altogether unknown to you.'

He answered with great gravity, 'My reason for

fixing my eyes upon you, is to admire the prodigious variety of adventures which are marked in the features of your face.' 'I see (said I, with an air of raillery) that your reverence deals in metoposcopy.' 'I may boast of possessing that art (replied the monk), and of having made presages, which have been verified by the event. I am also skilled in chiromancy, and will venture to say, that my oracles are infallible, when I have compared the inspection of the hand with that of the face.'

Although this old man had all the appearance of a wise person, I thought him so foolish, that I could not help laughing in his face. Instead of being offended he smiled at my impoliteness, and continued speaking in these words, after having cast his eyes round the hall, to be assured that nobody listened; 'I am not surprised to see you so prejudiced against two sciences, which are looked upon as frivolous in this age. The long and painful study which they demand discourages all the learned men, who renounce and decry them, out of despair of acquiring them. For my own part, I am not discouraged by the obscurity in which they are shrouded, no more than by the difficulties which incessantly occur in the search of chemical secrets, and in the wonderful art of transmuting metals into gold.

'But I don't consider (added he, recollecting himself) that I speak to a young cavalier, to whom my discourse must in effect appear quite chimerical. A sample of my skill will dispose you much better than all I can say, to judge more favourably of my art.' With these words, he took out of his pocket a phial full of red liquor; and then said: 'Here is an elixir which I composed this morning of the juice of certain plants distilled in an alembic; for I have employed almost all my life, like Democritus, in finding out the properties of minerals and simples. You shall see its virtue put to the proof. The wine which we now drink to supper, though it is execrable, shall become excellent.' So saying, he put into my bottle two drops

of his elixir, which rendered my wine more delicious than the best that is drank in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and when once that is gained, the judgement is no longer used. Charmed with such a fine secret, and persuaded that he must be more than the devil who could find it out, I cried in a transport of admiration, 'O! father, pray pardon me, if I took you at first for an old fool; I now do justice to your capacity, and need no more than I have seen, to be assured, that you could, if you pleased, convert in an instant a bar of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy should I be, could I possess such an admirable science.' 'Heaven preserve you from such an acquisition (said the old man, interrupting me with a profound sigh). You don't know, my son, what a fatal secret you wish for. Instead of envying, rather pity me, for having bestowed so much pains to make myself unhappy. I live in continual disquiet. I am afraid of being discovered, and that my labours will be rewarded by perpetual imprisonment. In this apprehension I lead a wandering life, disguised sometimes like a priest or monk, and sometimes like a peasant or cavalier. Is it then an advantage to know how to make gold at that price? And are not riches a real punishment for those persons who cannot enjoy them in tranquillity?'

This discourse seeming to me very sensible, I said to the sage, 'There is nothing like a quiet life: you give me a disgust at the philosopher's stone; and I will be contented with learning of you the future events of my life.' 'With all my heart, child, answered he. I have already made my remarks on your features: let us now see your hand.' I presented it to him with a confidence that will not do me much honour in the opinion of some readers; and he having examined it with great attention, exclaimed in a fit of enthusiasm, 'Ah! what transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! What capricious successions of misfortune and prosperity! But you have already experienced a great deal of these vicissitudes. You have

not a great many more afflictions to undergo; and a nobleman will confer upon you an agreeable destiny, not subject to change.' After having assured me, that I might depend on this prediction, he bade me farewell, and went out of the eating-house, leaving me quite engrossed with the things which I had heard. I did not at all doubt that the Marquis de Marialva was the nobleman in question; and of consequence, nothing seemed more possible than the accomplishment of the oracle. But though I had not seen the least appearance of probability, I could not have helped reposing an entire belief in the pretended monk, so much authority had he acquired in my opinion by his elixir. On my side, that I might hasten the happiness that was predicted to me, I resolved to attach myself to the Marquis more than I had done to any of my masters; and having formed this resolution, I retired to our house in a transport of joy that I cannot express. Never did a woman leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

## CHAPTER X

*The commission that the Marquis de Marialva gave to Gil Blas, and the manner in which that faithful secretary acquitted himself of it*

The Marquis was not yet come home from the lodgings of his actress; and I found his valets de chambre playing at primero, in his apartment, expecting his return. I made up to them, and we amused ourselves in making merry till two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was a little surprised to see me, and said with a gracious air, which made me guess that he returned very well satisfied with his evening's pleasure, 'How, Gil Blas! not yet a-bed?' I answered, that I was first willing to know what orders he had for me. 'I shall, perhaps (he resumed), give you a commission to-morrow morning; but it will be time enough then

to tell you the particulars. Meanwhile, you may go to rest; and henceforth remember, that I dispense with your attendance in the evening, having occasion for nobody but my valets de chambre.'

After this explanation, which at bottom gave me a good deal of pleasure, since it spared me a piece of subjection which I should have sometimes felt in a very disagreeable manner, I left the Marquis in his apartment, and retiring to my garret, went to bed; but having no inclination to sleep, it came into my head, that I should follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recollecting at night all that we have done in the day, in order to applaud our good, and condemn our bad actions.

I did not find my conscience clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct; but reproached myself with having supported the imposture of Laura. In vain did I suggest as an excuse, that I could not in honour give the lie to a girl, who had nothing in view, but to do me a pleasure; and that, in some shape, I found myself under a necessity of being an accomplice in the cheat. Little satisfied with this apology, I answered, that I ought not then to have pushed things so far; and that I must have a great deal of impudence to live with a nobleman, whose confidence I so ill repaid. In short, after a severe examination, I concluded, that if I was not a rogue, I was next kin to it.

From thence passing to the consequences, I represented to myself, that I played a very high game, in deceiving a man of quality, who, for my sins, would perhaps soon discover the trick. A reflection so judicious terrified me not a little; but the ideas of pleasure and interest soon dissipated my fear. Besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir would have been sufficient to remove my doubts. I gave myself up, therefore, to the most agreeable fancies: I formed new rules of arithmetic, to reckon within myself the sum to which my wages would amount at the end of ten years' service. To this I added the gratifications which I should receive from my master; and measuring

them by his liberal disposition, or rather by my own desires, I had an intemperance of imagination (if I may be allowed the expression), which set no bounds to my fortune. I was gradually lulled by so much wealth, and fell asleep, in the very act of building castles in Spain.

Next day, I got up at eight o'clock in the morning, to go and receive my patron's orders; but as I opened my door to go out, I was very much surprised to see him appear before me all alone, in his night-cap and morning-gown. 'Gil Blas (said he), last night, when I left your sister, I promised to be with her this morning; but an affair of consequence hinders me from keeping my word. Go and assure her from me, that I am very much mortified at the disappointment; and tell her, I shall certainly sup with her in the evening. This is not all (added he, putting into my hand a purse with a little shagreen box enriched with diamonds), carry this my picture to her, and keep this purse of fifty pistoles, which I give as a mark of the friendship I have already conceived for you.' I took the picture with one hand, and the purse I so little deserved with the other; running instantly to Laura, saying in the excess of joy with which I was transported, 'Good! the prediction is visibly accomplishing. What happiness is it to be the brother of such a handsome and gallant girl? What a pity it is, that there is not as much honour as profit and pleasure in it?'

Laura, contrary to the custom of people of her profession, being used to rise early, I surprised her at her toilet; where, in expectation of the Portuguese, she joined to her natural beauty all the auxiliary charms that the art of coquetry could bestow. 'Amiable Estella (said I to her when I entered), the loadstone of strangers, I may now sit at table with my master, since he has honoured me with a commission which gives me that prerogative, and of which I come to acquit myself. He cannot have the pleasure of your company this morning, as he proposed; but, for your consolation, will sup with you at night: and he sends

you his picture, which to me seems a matter of still greater consolation.'

I accordingly gave her the box, which, by the bright sparkling of the diamonds that adorned it, infinitely rejoiced her eyesight. She opened it, and shutting it again, after having considered the painting superficially, returned to the stones, whose beauty she extolled, saying with a smile, 'These are copies which we women of the stage value more than originals.'

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he entrusted me with the picture, had gratified me with a purse of fifty pistoles. 'I congratulate thee upon thy good fortune (said she to me), this nobleman begins where others even rarely end.' 'To you, my dear creature (I replied), I owe this present; the Marquis bestowed it upon me solely on account of my being your brother.' 'I wish (said she) that he would give you as much everyday; for I cannot express how dear thou art to me. The very first moment I saw thee, I attached myself to thee by a tie too strong for time to break. When I lost thee at Madrid, I did not despair of finding thee again; and yesterday, when I saw thee, received thee as a man whom fate brought back to my arms. In a word, my friend, heaven has destined us for one another: thou shalt be my husband; but we must first enrich ourselves. I want to have two or three more intrigues to make thee easy for life.'

I thanked her in a polite manner, for the trouble she intended to take on my account; and we insensibly engaged in a conversation that lasted till noon. Then I retired, to give an account to my master of the manner in which his present was received: and though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I did not fail to compose by the way a fine compliment, which I intended to repeat in her name. But when I went home, I was told that the Marquis had gone out: and it was decreed that I should see him no more; as may be perceived in reading the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XI

*Gil Blas receives a piece of news, which is like a thunderbolt to him*

I REPAIRED to my eating-house, where meeting two men of a very agreeable conversation, I dined and sat at table with them, till it was time to go to the play. Then we parted: they went about their own affairs, and I took the road to the theatre. I must observe, by the by, that I had all the reason in the world to be in good humour; mirth had reigned in my conversation with these two gentlemen; my fortune had a most smiling face; and notwithstanding my spirits sunk without my knowing the reason, and without my being able to keep them up. It was, doubtless, a presage of the misfortune with which I was threatened.

As I entered the green-room, Melchor Zapata came to me, and telling me softly to follow him, carried me into a private place, and addressed me in this manner, 'Señor Cavalier, I think it my duty to give you a very important piece of intelligence. You know that the Marquis de Marialva had, at first, a passion for Narcissa, my wife; and already appointed a day to come and take a slice of my rib, when the artful Estella found means to break the bargain, and allure the Portuguese nobleman to her own charms. You may well believe, that an actress does not lose such a good prey without vexation. My spouse has this affair at heart, and is capable of undertaking anything to be revenged: she has now a fair occasion. Yesterday, if you remember, all our servants crowded to see you: when the under candle-snuffer told some of the company, that he knew you very well, and that you were nothing less than Estella's brother.

'This report (added Melchor) reached the ears of Narcissa, who did not fail to interrogate the author, and he has confirmed his assertion, by telling her, that he knew you as Arsenia's valet, at the same time

that Estella, under the name of Laura, served that actress at Madrid. My wife, charmed with this discovery, will impart it to the Marquis de Marialva, who is to be at the play this evening. Take your measures accordingly; if you are not actually Estella's brother, I advise you, as a friend, and on account of our old acquaintance, to provide for your safety. Narcissa, who demands but one victim, has allowed me to give you this notice, that you may prevent any sinister accident by immediate flight.'

It would have been superfluous in him to say more of the matter. I thanked the stage-player for his information, and he easily perceived, by my terrified look, that I was not the man to give the candle-snuffer the lie. I did not feel the least inclination to depend upon my effrontery: I was not even tempted to bid Laura farewell, lest she should have insisted upon my facing it out. I could very well conceive, that she was an actress of such skill, as to be able to extricate herself out of the dilemma; but I saw nothing except an infallible chastisement for me, and I was not so much in love as to brave it. My sole study being, therefore, to escape with my household gods, I mean my baggage, I disappeared from the playhouse in a twinkling, and, with the utmost dispatch, caused my portmanteau to be transported to the house of a carrier, who was to set out for Toledo, at three o'clock next morning. I could have wished to be with the Count de Polan, whose house seemed my only asylum: but I was not yet there, and I could not, without the utmost uneasiness, think on the time I had to stay in a city, where I was afraid they would search for me, even in the night.

I did not, for all that, omit going to supper, at my eating-house, although I was as much disturbed as a debtor, who knows that there are bailiffs at his heels. What I ate that evening, did not, I believe, produce excellent chyle in my stomach. Being the miserable sport of fear, I examined everybody that came into the hall; and when, unluckily, any ill-looking fellow

entered (a common case in these places), I shivered with dread. Having supped, in the midst of continual alarms, I rose from table, and returned to the carrier's house, where I threw myself on a truss of fresh straw, and lay till the hour of our departure.

Meanwhile, my patience was sufficiently exercised. I was attacked with a thousand disagreeable reflections: when I chanced to slumber, I beheld the furious Marquis mangling the fair face of Laura with blows, and demolishing everything in her house; or heard him order his servants to make me perish under the bastinado. Then starting, I awoke; and though to wake is usually a great comfort after such a terrible dream, waking was to me more dreadful than the dream itself. Happily for me, the carrier delivered me from my affliction, by giving me notice that his mules were ready. I was immediately a-foot, and, thank heaven! set out radically cured of chiromancy and Laura. In proportion as we moved from Granada, my mind resumed its tranquillity; and I began to enter into conversation with the carrier. I laughed at some pleasant stories he recounted, and lost, insensibly, all my fear. I enjoyed a sound sleep at Úbeda, where we lay the first night, and on the fourth arrived at Toledo.

My first care was to ask a direction for the Count de Polan's house, whither I repaired, very well persuaded that he would not suffer me to lodge in any other place: but I reckoned without my host; for I found nobody at home but the housekeeper, who told me that his master had set out in the evening for the castle of Leyva, having received a message that Seraphina was dangerously ill.

I did not expect the absence of the Count, which diminished the joy I felt in being at Toledo, and induced me to take another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go thither; reflecting that I might push myself at Court, where a superior genius, as I had heard, was not absolutely necessary to make a fortune. The very next day, I

took the advantage of a return horse for that capital of Spain; and fortune conducted me thither in order to make me act higher parts than those which I had hitherto performed.

## CHAPTER XII

*Gil Blas takes lodgings in a house where he contracts an acquaintance with Captain Chinchilla. The character of that officer; with an account of the affair that brought him to Madrid*

On my first arrival at Madrid, I fixed my habitation in a house that was let into lodgings, where lived, among other people, an old captain, who had come from the farther end of New Castile, to solicit at Court for a pension, which he thought he had but too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chinchilla. It was not without astonishment that I beheld him for the first time, being a man turned of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely meagre. He wore a thick moustache, that curled up to his temples on each side. Over and above his want of a leg and arm, a large plaster of green silk supplied the place of one eye; and the scars of many wounds appeared on his face. These things excepted, he was pretty much like another man[1]. Besides, he had a good deal of understanding, and still more gravity; was scrupulous in his morals, and, in particular, piqued himself on his delicacy in points of honour.

After having conversed with him two or three times, he honoured me with his confidence. I soon became acquainted with all his affairs. He recounted to me on what occasions he had left an eye at Naples, an

[1] So far as externals are concerned, the original of Don Hannibal de Chinchilla is said to have been Marshal de Rantzau (1609-1650), who, during the course of his campaigns, received sixty-six wounds, and lost an arm, a leg, an eye, and an ear.

arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I admired in his narration of battles and sieges was, that not one gasconade escaped him, nor even a word in his own praise; though I could have willingly pardoned him for boasting of the half of himself that remained, as an indemnification for the other half that he had lost. Those officers who return from the wars safe and sound are seldom so modest.

But he told me, the thing that gave him the most concern was, that he had spent a considerable estate in his campaigns, so that now his whole fortune was reduced to about a hundred ducats a year, which was scarce sufficient to maintain his moustache, clear his lodging, and pay for the writing his memorials. 'For in short, Señor Cavalier (added he, shrugging up his shoulders), I present one, thank God, every day, without being favoured with the least notice. One would say, that there is a wager between the Prime Minister and me, which of us shall first fail, I in giving, or he in receiving them. I have also had the honour to present several to his Majesty; but the curate sings no better than his clerk[1]; and, in the meantime, my castle of Chinchilla sinks into ruins for want of reparation.'

'We must despair of nothing (said I to the Captain), you are now perhaps on the eve of seeing all your toils and troubles repaid with interest.' 'I ought not to flatter myself with that hope (replied Don Hannibal), three days are not yet elapsed, since I spoke to one of the Minister's secretaries, and, if I may believe what he said, I may make myself very easy.' 'And pray, what did he say? (I replied). Did he pretend that you were not worthy of a recompense?' 'You shall judge (resumed Chinchilla). The secretary told me, very plainly, "Master What-d'ye-call-'um, don't brag so much of your zeal and fidelity. You have done no more than your duty, in exposing yourself to danger

[1] A reversal of the proverb quoted by the regidor, who suggested a plan for discovering the stray donkey in *Don Quixote*, Part II, Chapter xxv.

in behalf of your country. The glory alone which attends brave actions, is a sufficient recompense, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard in particular. You must undeceive yourself, therefore, if you look on the gratification you solicit, as a debt due to your valour. Provided it be granted to you, you will owe it entirely to the favour and generosity of the King, who is pleased to think himself indebted to those of his subjects who have distinguished themselves in the service of the State." You see, by this (pursued the Captain), that I am still in its debt, and that, in all likelihood, I shall return as rich as I came.'

One naturally interests himself for a brave man in adversity. I encouraged him to persevere, and offered to write his memorials gratis. I went even so far as to offer him my purse, and to conjure him to take out of it what money he wanted. But he was none of those who never wait for a second invitation on these occasions. On the contrary, he showed himself very delicate on this point, and thanked me, in a lofty manner, for my goodwill. He afterwards told me, that rather than be a burden to anybody, he had accustomed himself, by degrees, to live so frugally, that the least nourishment was sufficient for his subsistence. This was but too true: his whole food consisted of leeks and onions; and, therefore, he was nothing but skin and bone. That he might have no witness of his wretched repast, he used to lock himself up in his chamber at meals. I obtained of him, however, by dint of entreaty, that we should dine and sup together; and deceiving his pride by an ingenious compassion, ordered more victuals and liquor than I had occasion for, to be brought, and urged him to eat and drink. At first he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my entreaties. After which, becoming insensibly more bold, he, of himself, assisted me in clearing my plate, and emptying my bottle.

When he had drank four or five draughts, and reconciled his stomach to good nourishment: 'Truly (said he, with an air of gaiety) you are very bewitching,

Señor Gil Blas, you make me do what you please; your behaviour divests me of all fear of abusing your beneficent disposition.' My Captain, at that time, seemed so well rid of his shame, that if I had laid hold of the opportunity of pressing him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it. But I did not put him to the trial; contenting myself with having made him my messmate, and with taking the trouble not only of writing his memorials, but also of helping him to compose them. By means of having copied homilies, I had learned to turn a period, and was become a kind of author. The old officer, on his part, piqued himself on his knowledge in composition: so that exerting ourselves together, through emulation, we produced morsels of eloquence, worthy of the most celebrated masters of Salamanca. But in vain did each of us exhaust his genius, in sowing flowers of rhetoric in those memorials; it was no better, as the saying is, than sowing them on sand. Whatever expedient we fell upon to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the Court paid no regard to it. A circumstance that did not at all engage the old invalid to make the eulogium of those officers, who ruin themselves in the field. In his bad humour, he cursed his fate, and wished Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries at the devil.

To complete his mortification, it happened one day, that, under his very nose, a poet, introduced by the Duke of Alva, having rehearsed, in the presence, an ode on the birth of an Infanta, was gratified with a pension of five hundred ducats[1]. I believe the maimed Captain would have run mad on this occasion, had I not been at great pains to recompose him. 'What is the matter? (said I, seeing him quite beside himself) there is nothing in this that ought to give you uneasiness. Has it not been the privilege of poets, time immemorial, to make Princes pay tribute to the muse? There is not a crowned head in the world, that does

[1] Llorente will have it that the reference is to the birth of the Infanta Margarita (May 24, 1610).

not gratify one of those gentlemen with a pension: and, between you and me, these sorts of rewards being generally transmitted to the knowledge of posterity, immortalize the liberality of Kings; whereas the other recompenses which they bestow, are often but so much loss of their reputation. How many rewards did Augustus dispense? How many pensions did he grant, of which we have not the least intimation? But the most remote posterity will always know, as we do, that Virgil received near two hundred thousand crowns from the bounty of that Emperor.'

Notwithstanding all I could say to Don Hannibal, the fruits of the ode stuck in his stomach like lead; and as he could not digest it, he resolved to abandon the whole of his pursuit. But first, being willing, as his last effort, to present one other memorial to the Duke of Lerma[1], we went together to the house of that Prime Minister, where we met a young man, who having saluted the Captain, said to him, with an affectionate air, 'My dear old master, is it you? what affair has brought you hither? If you have occasion for a person of interest with his highness, pray command me; I offer you my good offices.' 'How, Pedrillo! (replied the Captain) to hear you talk, one would imagine you enjoy some important post in this family.' 'I have, at least (answered the young man), power enough to be of service to an honest country gentleman like you.' 'If that be the case (said the officer, with a smile), I have recourse to your protection.' ''Tis granted (resumed Pedrillo). Let me know what is the business, and I promise you shall get some snips out of the Minister.'

We had no sooner communicated the affair to this benevolent young fellow, than he asked where Don Hannibal lodged; in which being satisfied, he assured us, that we should hear of him next day; and then

[1] Francisco Gomez de Rojas y Sandoval (1555 ?-1625), Marquess of Denia, was created Duke of Lerma in 1599. He was Philip III's political adviser till 1618, and proved himself a most corrupt and incompetent Minister.

disappeared, without giving us the least hint of what he intended to do, or even telling us whether or no he belonged to the Duke of Lerma. I was curious to know who this Pedrillo was, that seemed so sprightly. 'He is a young fellow (said the Captain) who served me some years ago, and who, seeing me in want, left me to go in quest of a better place. I don't blame him for that: it is very natural for one to change for the better. He is a wag who does not want understanding, and is as intriguing as the devil: but in spite of all his art, I don't depend a great deal upon the zeal which he has expressed in my behalf.' 'Who knows (said I) but he may be of some use? If he belongs, for example, to some one of the Duke's principal officers, he may have it in his power to do you service. You are not ignorant that everything is carried, among the great, by cabal and intrigue; that they have favourite domestics, who lead them by the nose; and that these again, in their turn, are governed by their own valets.'

Next morning, Pedrillo coming to our lodgings, 'Gentlemen (said he), if I did not explain myself yesterday, as to the means I have of serving Captain Chinchilla, it was, because we were not in a place proper for such an explanation. Besides, I was willing to sound the business, before I disclosed it to you. You must know, then, that I am the lackey and confidant of Señor Rodrigo de Calderon, the Duke of Lerma's first secretary[1]. My master, who is very much addicted to gallantry, sups every evening with an Aragonian nightingale, that he keeps encaged near the Court. She is a very handsome girl, from Albarazin, of good understanding, and sings to admiration; therefore she is called Señora Sirena. As I carry a *billet-doux* to her every morning, I have just now seen her; I have proposed that she shall make Don Hannibal pass for her uncle, and, on that supposition, engage

[1] Rodrigo Calderon, afterwards Marquis de Siete Iglesias, was Lerma's lieutenant, and was no less corrupt, though perhaps more competent, than his chief.

her gallant to protect him. She is willing to undertake the affair; for, besides the small advantage she foresees in it for herself, she will be extremely glad to be thought the niece of a brave gentleman.'

Señor de Chinchilla made wry faces at this proposal, and expressed a reluctance in making himself an accomplice of such a prank; and still more, in suffering a she-adventurer to dishonour his family, by saying she belonged to it. He was disgusted at it, not only on account of himself, but also perceived in it (if I may be allowed the expression) a retro-active ignominy upon all his ancestors. This delicacy seemed very unseasonable to Pedrillo, who being shocked at it, exclaimed, 'You jest, sure, to take it in that view! You are such a set of people, you cottage squires, your vanity is quite ridiculous. Señor Cavalier (he pursued, addressing himself to me), are you not surprised at the scruples he makes? Egad! it is a fine thing indeed to stand on such punctilios at Court! Fortune is never neglected there, whatever shape it assumes.'

I approved of what Pedrillo said, and we harangued the Captain so successfully, that we prevailed upon him, in spite of himself, to become Sirena's uncle. When we had gained this victory over his pride, we laid all our three heads together, in order to compose a new memorial for the Minister, and it was revised, augmented, and corrected accordingly. I then wrote it out fair, and Pedrillo carried it to the Aragonian lady, who, that very evening, put it into the hands of Señor Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner, that the secretary believing her really the Captain's niece, promised to exert himself in his behalf. A few days after, we saw the effect of this our work. Pedrillo came to our lodging with an air of triumph: 'Good news (said he to Chinchilla); the King is going to make a distribution of governments, benefices, and pensions, in which you shall not be forgot. But I am ordered to ask what present you intend to make to Sirena. As for my own part, I declare I'll have

nothing at all. I prefer the pleasure of having contributed towards bettering my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case with our nymph of Albarazin: she is a little Jewishly inclined, when the business is to oblige her neighbour: she would take money of her own father; so you may judge if she will refuse it from a pretended uncle.'

'Let her mention her demand (replied Don Hannibal), she shall, if she pleases, have yearly one-third of the pension I obtain; and that ought to satisfy her, if the whole revenues of his Catholic Majesty were concerned in the bargain.' 'For my own part (replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury), I would cheerfully rely upon your word because I know the value of it; but you have to do with a little creature, who is naturally distrustful. Besides, she would much rather have, once for all, two-thirds of the product advanced in ready money.' 'Where the devil does she think I shall find it? (cried the officer, hastily interrupting him). Does she think I am a State-Treasurer? It seems you have not made her acquainted with my situation.' 'Pardon me (replied Pedrillo), she knows very well that you are as poor as Job: after what I have told her, she cannot be ignorant of your circumstances. But don't give yourself any trouble about the matter, I am a man fertile in expedients. I know an old rogue of a lawyer, who takes pleasure in lending his money at ten per cent. You shall make an assignment, with security to him, before a notary, of the first year of your pension, for the like sum, which you shall acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will touch in effect, the interest included. With regard to the security, the lender will be contented with your castle of Chinchilla, such as it is; so that we shall have no dispute upon that score.'

The Captain protested that he would accept of the conditions, if he should be lucky enough to have any share in the favours which were to be distributed next day. And he was not disappointed; being gratified with a pension of three hundred pistoles on a certain

government. As soon as he understood this piece of news, he gave all the security that was demanded, transacted his little affairs, and returned to New Castile. with some pistoles in his pocket.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Gil Blas meets his dear friend Fabricio at Court; their mutual joy; they repair together to a certain place, where a curious conversation happens between them*

I CONTRACTED a custom of going every morning to Court, where I commonly spent two or three hours, in seeing the grandees pass and repass, though they appeared there without that splendour which surrounds them in other places.

One day as I walked to and fro, and strutted through the apartments, making, like many others, a foolish figure enough, I perceived Fabricio, whom I had left at Valladolid, in the service of a hospital director. What astonished me was, that he talked familiarly to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis de Santa Cruz. Nay, these two noblemen seemed to listen to him with pleasure, and he was as well dressed as a man of quality. 'Am I not mistaken?' said I to myself. 'Can this be the son of Barber Nuñez? Perhaps it is some young courtier, who resembles him.' I did not long remain in doubt: the noblemen went away, and I accosted Fabricio. He knew me at first sight; and after having made me squeeze through the crowd with him, to get out of the apartments, 'My dear Gil Blas (said he, embracing me), I am rejoiced to see you again. How art thou employed at Madrid? art thou still in service? or hast thou some post at Court? Give me an account of all that has happened to thee, since thy precipitate retreat from Valladolid.' 'You ask me a great many questions at once (said I), and we are not now in a proper place to relate adventures.' 'Thou art in the right (he replied), we shall

be more at liberty in my lodgings. Come, I will show you the way; it is not far from hence. I am quite my own master, agreeably lodged, perfectly easy in my circumstances; I am contented with my situation, and happy, because I think myself so.'

I accepted the proposal, and followed Fabricio, who stopped before a very fine house, where he told me he lodged. We crossed a court, where, on one side, there was a great staircase that led to very superb apartments, and on the other a small flight, equally dark and narrow, by which we ascended to the lodging he had so much extolled. It consisted of one room only, which my ingenious friend had divided into four, by thin deal boards. The first served as an antechamber to the second, where he lay; he had made a closet of the third, and a kitchen of the last. The chamber and antechamber were lined with maps, and theses of philosophy, and the furniture was suitable to this kind of hanging; consisting of a large brocade bed, very much worn, old chairs covered with yellow serge, garnished with a fringe of Granada silk of the same colour; a table with gilt feet, covered with leather that seemed to have been red once, and bordered with a tinsel fringe become black by the lapse of time; with an ebony cupboard, adorned with figures coarsely carved. He had in his closet a little table, instead of a bureau; and his library was composed of some books, with several bundles of paper lying on shelves, placed above one another, along the wall. His kitchen, which was conformable to the rest, contained some earthenware, and other necessary utensils.

Fabricio, after having given me time to consider his apartment, said, 'What dost thou think of my lodging and economy? ain't thou enchanted with them?' 'Yes, faith (I replied, smiling), I am so. Thou must have certainly played thy cards well at Madrid, to be so well furnished. Thou, doubtless, enjoyest some post.' 'Heaven forbid! (replied he) the business I follow is above all employments whatever. A man of fashion, to whom this house belongs, gave me a room, which

I have divided into four, and furnished, as thou seest. I meddle with nothing but what gives me pleasure, and feel not the cravings of necessity.' 'Pray be more explicit (said I, interrupting him), you irritate the desire I have of knowing what you do.' 'Well (said he), thou shalt be satisfied. I am turned author, and have commenced wit; I write in verse as well as in prose, and am equally good at everything.'

'Thou a favourite of Apollo! (cried I, laughing). This is what I never could have divined. I should have been much less surprised to have found thee in a quite contrary situation. What charms couldst thou find in the condition of a poet? Methinks these people are commonly despised in civil life, and are far from having an established ordinary.' 'O fie! (cried he in his turn) thou talkest of those miserable authors, whose works are the refuse of libraries and players. Is it to be wondered at, that such writers are not esteemed? But good authors, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I may say, without vanity, that I am one of that number.' 'I don't at all doubt it (said I), thou art a young fellow of excellent genius. That which is composed by thee cannot be bad. All that I am at a loss to know is, how thou wast first seized with the rage of rhyme.'

'Thy surprise is just (replied Nuñez); I was so well satisfied with my situation while in the service of Don Manuel Ordoñez, that I did not so much as wish for any other. But my genius rising by degrees, like that of Plautus, above servitude, I composed a comedy, which was acted by the company who performed at Valladolid. Although it was not worth a fig, it met with great success: from whence I concluded that the public was a good milch cow, which easily parted with its store. This reflection, joined to the furious desire of composing new pieces, detached me from the hospital. The love of poetry banished my passion for riches; and resolving to repair to Madrid, as the centre of wit, in order to form my taste, I demanded my dismission from the director, who did not grant it

without regret, so much affection had he conceived for me. "Fabricio (said he), hast thou any cause to be dissatisfied?" "No, sir (I replied); you are the best of masters; and I am penetrated with your generosity. But, you know, one must follow his destiny. I find I am born to eternize my name by works of genius." "What folly possesses thee! (resumed the good citizen) thou hast already taken root in the hospital, and art of that kind of wood of which stewards and even directors are made. Thou art going to leave what is solid, in order to employ thyself in trifles; and thou wilt soon repent of thy imprudence, my child."

'The director seeing that he opposed my design to no purpose, paid my wages, and over and above, made me a present of fifty ducats, as a recompense for my faithful services: so, that with this, and what I found means to glean in the little commissions that were entrusted to my integrity, I was in a condition, on my arrival at Madrid, to appear in a very handsome manner. This I failed not to do; though the writers of our nation don't much pique themselves on their neat appearance. I soon became acquainted with Lope de Vega[1], Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra[2], and other famous authors; but in preference to these great men, I chose for my preceptor, a young bachelor of Córdova, the incomparable Don Luis de Góngora, the finest genius that ever Spain produced[3]. He will not allow his works to be printed in his lifetime, but contents himself with reading them to his friends; and, what is very remarkable, nature has endowed him with the rare talent of succeeding in all kinds of poetry. He chiefly excels in satire, which is indeed his main

[1] Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, the greatest of Spanish dramatists, was born in 1562 and died in 1635.

[2] Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, the author of *Don Quixote*, was born in 1547 and died in 1616.

[3] Góngora was born in 1561 and died in 1627. He was, therefore, not a young bachelor, but a man of fifty, when Fabricio took him for a model.

strength. He is not (like Lucilius)[1] a muddy river that sweeps along with it abundance of slime; but rather like the Tagus, that rolls over golden sands its limpid stream.' 'Thou drawest (said I to Fabricio) an agreeable picture of this same bachelor; and I don't doubt that a person of such merit has a great number of envious enemies.' 'All our authors (he replied), good as well as bad, inveigh bitterly against him. He delights, says one, in bombast, points, metaphors, and transposition. His verses, saith another, are as obscure as those which the Salian priests sang in their processions, and which nobody understood. Others again find fault with his composing sometimes sonnets or romances, sometimes comedies, stanzas, and acrostics[2]; as if he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse all the great masters in their own different ways. But all these efforts of jealousy are baffled by a muse that is cherished by all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest.

'It was under this skilful master that I served my apprenticeship, and I dare say it has appeared: for, I have so happily imbibed his genius, that I have already composed some detached pieces which he would not blush to father. I offer my ware (according to his example), in the houses of the great, where I am wonderfully well received, and have to do with people who are not difficult to please. 'Tis true, indeed, my successful beginning has been of no disservice to my later compositions. In short, I am beloved by several noblemen, and in particular, live with the Duke of Medina Sidonia, as Horace once lived with Maecenas. You see (added Fabricio), in what manner I was metamorphosed into an author.

[1] This Latin satirist flourished between 180-103 B.C.

[2] *Letrilles* in the original. Góngora's *letrillas* bear no resemblance to acrostics, but a satisfactory English equivalent is not easily to be found. Góngora's dramatic essays were few and unsuccessful; the sole surviving specimens are *Las Firmezas de Isabel*, and fragments of the *Comedia Venatoria* and *Doctor Carlino*.

I have nothing else to relate; so, that it is now thy turn, Gil Blas, to rehearse thy exploits.'

I opened accordingly, and suppressing every trivial circumstance, gave him the detail he desired: after which, it being dinner-time, he took out of his ebony cupboard a couple of napkins, some bread, the remains of a shoulder of roast mutton, a bottle of excellent wine, and we sat down to table, with all the gaiety of two friends who meet after a long separation. 'Thou seest (said he) my free and independent life: I might, if I would, go and dine everyday with the people of quality; but, besides that the poetic inclination keeps me oftentimes at home, I am a sort of an Aristippus; and can equally accommodate myself to company and solitude, to affluence and frugality.' We liked the wine so well, that there was a necessity of taking another bottle from the store; and towards the end of the repast, I expressed a desire of seeing some of his productions. He immediately searched among his papers for a sonnet, which he read aloud with great emphasis. Nevertheless, in spite of the charms of his reading, I found the performance so obscure, that I could not comprehend the meaning of one syllable. Perceiving my ignorance, 'This sonnet (said he) does not seem very clear to thy apprehension: is it not so?' I owned to him, that I could have wished it had been more plain. Upon which, he fell a-laughing at my expense. 'If this sonnet (he resumed) is not intelligible, so much the better. The natural and simple won't do for sonnets, odes, and other works that require the sublime. The sole merit of these is in their obscurity; and it is sufficient if the poet himself thinks he understands them.' 'You joke, friend (said I, interrupting him), good sense and perspicuity ought to be ingredients in poetry of all kinds whatever; and if thy incomparable Góngora writes not more plainly than thou dost, I confess my opinion of him sinks apace. He must be a poet who can never deceive any other age than his own. Let us now have a specimen of thy prose.' Hereupon, Nuñez produced a preface, which (he said)

he intended to prefix to a collection of comedies that he had then in the press; and having read it, asked my opinion. 'I am (said I) no better pleased with thy prose than with thy poetry. Thy sonnet is a piece of verbose fustian; and thy preface is composed of far-fetched expressions, words that have not the public stamp, perplexed phrases; in a word, thy style is quite peculiar to thyself; and the books of our best authors, ancient as well as modern, are written in a quite different manner.' 'Poor ignoramus! (cried Fabricio) thou dost not know, then, that every prosaic writer who now aspires at the reputation of a delicate pen affects that singularity of style, and those odd expressions which shock thee so much. There are of us, five or six bold innovators who have undertaken to make a thorough change in the language; and we will accomplish it (please God) in spite of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and all the fine geniuses who cavil at our new modes of speech. We are seconded by a number of partisans of distinction, and have even some theologians in our cabal[1].

'After all (added he), our design is commendable; and, prejudice apart, we are more valuable than those natural writers, who speak like the common run of mankind. I don't know for what reason they are esteemed by so many persons of honour. Their manner was proper enough at Athens, or Rome, where there was no distinction in point of speaking; so that Socrates said to Alcibiades, the people was an excellent schoolmaster: but at Madrid we have both a good and bad language, and our courtiers express themselves quite otherwise than our citizens, believe me. In short, our new style overtops that of our antagonists. I will, by one example, make thee perceive the difference between the gentility of our diction, and the flatness of theirs. They would say quite plainly (for

[1] Lesage is believed to refer to Isaac-Joseph Berruyer (1681-1758), who joined the Jesuit order on November 4, 1697; he obtained a certain notoriety by the vapid preciosity of his *Histoire du peuple de Dieu* (1728).

instance), "Interludes embellish a comedy." While we with more spirit, would pronounce—"Interludes create beauty in a comedy." Take notice of that, "Create beauty." Dost thou perceive all the brilliancy, all the delicacy, all the prettiness of the expression?'

I interrupted my innovator with a loud laugh. 'Go, Fabricio (said I), thou art quite an original with this thy precious language.' 'And thou (answered he) art no better than a beast, with thy natural style. Go (said he, repeating the words of the Archbishop of Granada), go and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats; and heaven direct you with that sum; adieu, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you a great deal of good fortune, with a little more taste.'

I redoubled my mirth at this sally, and Fabricio forgiving me for having spoken so irreverently of his writings, lost nothing of his good humour. We finished our second bottle, and getting up from table in a pretty good trim, went out with a design to walk in the Prado; but passing by the door of a tavern, we took it in our heads to go in.

This place was usually frequented by good company: and I observed in two separate halls a great many cavaliers amusing themselves in different diversions. In one, they played at draughts and primero; and in the other, ten or twelve persons were listening very attentively to a dispute between two professed wits. We had no occasion to go near them, in order to learn that a metaphysical proposition was the subject of their dispute: for, they talked with such warmth and transport, that they looked like people possessed. I imagine if Elcazar's[1] ring had been put under their noses, we should have seen devils issue with their breath. 'Good God! (said I to my companion) what passion! what lungs! These disputants were certainly born to be public criers. The greatest part of mankind are misplaced.' 'Yes, truly (he replied); these

[1] A conjurer who professed to cast out devils; he performed some of his tricks before the Emperor Vespasian.

people seem to be of the race of Novius, that Roman banker, whose voice exceeded the noise of carmen[1]. But (added he), what gives me the greatest disgust at their discourse, is, that our ears are stunned to no purpose.' We removed at a distance from those vociferous metaphysicians, and by that expedient, I prevented a violent headache which had begun to seize me. We went and sat down in the corner of the other hall, whence, while we drank refreshing liquors, we examined the cavaliers as they came in and went out; as Nuñez knew almost all of them. 'Egad! (cried he) the dispute of our philosophers won't be soon over: here are fresh reinforcements arriving: these three men will engage in the fray. But seest thou these two originals going out? That little, swarthy, withered creature, whose lank straight hair falls down in equal portions before and behind, is called Don Julian de Villanuno; and is a young judge who affects the beau: one of my friends and I going to dine with him t'other day, surprised him in a pretty singular occupation. He was diverting himself in his closet, by throwing away the writings of a process, of which he is to make a report, and making a greyhound bring them back again to him; while the dog tore them to pieces very handsomely. The name of that licentiate with the copper nose, who accompanies him, is Don Cherubin Tonto[2], a canon of the church of Toledo, the weakest mortal in the world; though by his sprightly smiling air, you would imagine he had a great deal of wit. He has bright sparkling eyes, with an arch malicious sneer; so that one would be apt to think him a wag. When he hears a delicate performance read, he listens with such attention as seems full of understanding, and all the while comprehends nothing at all of the matter. He dined with us at the judge's house, where an infinite number of witty things were said: but he spoke never a word,

[1] This bawling usurer is mentioned by Horace, *Satires*, I, vi.

[2] *Tonto*=booby.

though he applauded them with grimaces and gestures that seemed even superior to the sallies that we uttered.'

'Dost thou know (said I to Nuñez) these two shabby fellows, who, with their elbows on the table, sit in a corner, and converse together in whispers?' 'No (said he), their faces are quite unknown to me; but, in all likelihood, they are coffee-house politicians[1] who censure the Government. Mind that genteel cavalier who whistles as he walks through the hall, and supports himself sometimes on one foot, sometimes on another: that is Don Agustin Moreto, a young poet who was born with some genius, but flatterers and ignorant people have almost turned his brain[2]. The man whom he accosts is one of his confederates, who is also moonstruck, and rhymes in prose.

'More authors still! (cried he, showing me two well-dressed men coming in) one would think they had made a rendezvous here, to pass in review before thee. These are Don Bernard Deslenguado[3], and Don Sebastian de Villaviciosa[4]. The first is a genius full of gall, an author born under the planet Saturn, a malicious mortal, whose pleasure consists in hating all the world, and is himself beloved by nobody. As for Don Sebastian, he is a young fellow of candour, who will let nothing lie upon his conscience; he lately brought a performance on the stage, which had an extraordinary

[1] *Politiques de café;* but the use of coffee was not general in Europe till after the period in which the scene is laid.

[2] Agustin Moreto y Cavana (1618-1659), a Spanish dramatist, famous for his skill in recasting the works of his predecessors. From Moreto's *El Desden con el desden* Molière derived *La Princesse d'Élide;* from *La tia y la sobrina* Thomas Corneille derived *Le Baron d'Albirac;* and, at the suggestion (it is said) of Charles II, John Crowne based his *Sir Courtly Nice* on *El lindo Don Diego.*

[3] *Deslenguado*=free of speech, foul-mouthed.

[4] A court-dramatist prominent in the reign of Philip IV. *Cuantas veo tantas quiero,* written in collaboration with Francisco de Avellaneda de la Cueva y Guerra, is perhaps the best remembered of his plays.

run; and now he has printed it, that he may no longer abuse the esteem of the public.'

The charitable pupil of Góngora was going on in explaining the figures of this picture, which shifted so often to the view; when a gentleman belonging to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, came and interrupted him, saying, 'Señor Don Fabricio, I was looking for you, in order to let you know that his grace would speak with you immediately, at his own house.' Nuñez, who knew that a grandee's wishes cannot be too soon satisfied, quitted me in a trice, to go and wait upon his Maecenas; while I remained very much astonished to hear him honoured with the appellation of Don, and see him thus become noble in despite of his sire, Master Chrysostom, the barber.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Fabricio introduces Gil Blas to the service of Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman*

I was so desirous of seeing Fabricio again, that I visited him early next morning. 'Good morrow (said I, when I entered), Señor Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather glow-worm, of the Asturian nobility!' At these words he laughed heartily. 'Thou hast observed, then (cried he), that I am dubbed a Don[1]?' 'Yes, honourable sir (I replied), and give me leave to tell you, that when you recounted your metamorphosis yesterday, you forgot the best part of it.' 'I did so (answered he), but truly, if I have assumed that honourable title, it was not so much with a view to gratify my own vanity, as to accommodate myself to that of others. Thou knowest the humour of the Spaniards; they make no account of an honest man, if he has the misfortune to be both poor and mean born. I must tell thee too, that I see so many people call themselves Don Francisco, Don Pedro, or Don

[1] See Book V, Chapter ii, Vol. i, p. 369, *n*.

what-you-will, that if there is no cheat in the case, thou wilt allow nobility to be a very common thing, and agree, that a plebeian of merit honours it by his association. But let us change the subject (added he); last night I supped at the Duke of Medina Sidonia's, where, among other guests, was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank: and the conversation turning on the ridiculous effects of self-love, I, charmed that I had it in my power to entertain the company on that subject, regaled them with the story of the homilies. Thou mayst well imagine they laughed heartily, and censured the Archbishop as he deserved. This produced no bad effect for thee; for thou wast pitied by everybody; and Count Galiano, after having asked a good many questions concerning thee, to which thou mayst believe I made suitable answers, desired me to bring thee to his house. I was just now going in quest of thee, to conduct thee thither. I suppose he intends to offer thee the place of one of his secretaries; and I advise thee to accept of it. The Count is rich, and spends like an Ambassador, at Madrid: he is come to Court, it is said, to confer with the Duke of Lerma, about the crown demesnes which that Minister designs to alienate in Sicily. In short, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, seems to be generous, just, and open; and thou canst not do better than attach thyself to him: he is the man, in all probability, who is destined to enrich thee, according to what was foretold in thy behalf at Granada.'

'I had resolved (said I to Nuñez) to live at large a little, and enjoy myself a good while, before I should go to service again: but thou speakest to me of this Sicilian Count in such a manner, as induces me to change my resolution, and even to wish I was already in his family.' 'Thou mayst soon be there (he replied), or I am much mistaken.' At the same time we went out together to the Count, who lodged in the house of his friend Don Sancho de Ávila, then in the country.

We found in the court a great number of pages and

footmen, clothed in a livery equally rich and gay; and in the antechamber several ushers, gentlemen, and other officers, all magnificently dressed; but withal so ugly, that they looked like a company of apes in Spanish garb. There are figures, both of men and women, on which all art is thrown away.

Don Fabricio having sent in his name, was immediately introduced into a room, whither I followed him; and found the Count in his morning-gown, sitting on a sofa, and drinking chocolate. We saluted him with all the demonstrations of the most profound respect; and he honoured us with an inclination of the head, accompanied by such a gracious smile, as at once gained my heart. A wonderful effect, though an ordinary one, which a favourable reception from the great produces in our breasts! They must receive us very ill indeed, before we be disgusted at their behaviour.

Having drank his chocolate, he amused himself some time in playing with a large baboon that sat by him, and was called Cupid. I don't know for what reason the name of that god was bestowed on this animal, unless it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing else. Such as it was, however, it did not fail to give vast delight to its master, who was so much charmed with its merry tricks, that he hugged it incessantly in his arms. Though Nuñez and I were not much diverted with the gambols of this beast, we feigned ourselves enchanted with its performances; which pleased the Sicilian so much, that he suspended the pleasure he enjoyed in this pastime, to tell me, 'Friend, you have it in your option to be one of my secretaries: if you like the place, I will give you two hundred pistoles a year, without any other recommendation than that of Don Fabricio.' 'My lord (cried Nuñez), I am bolder than Plato, who had not courage enough to answer for one of his friends, whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius. I am not afraid of bringing reproaches upon myself, by vouching for my friend.'

I thanked the Asturian poet with a low bow, for

his obliging confidence: then addressing myself to my patron, assured him of my zeal and fidelity. This nobleman no sooner perceived that I relished his proposal, than he ordered his steward to be called; to whom having communicated something in a whisper, he said, 'Gil Blas, I will tell you presently what is to be the nature of your employment. Meanwhile, you may follow my steward, who has received orders concerning you.' I accordingly obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the Count and Cupid.

The steward, who was a most subtle Messinese, conducted me to his apartment, where he loaded me with civilities; and sending for the tailor who had equipped the whole family, ordered him to make for me, with all dispatch, a suit of clothes of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The tailor having taken measure of me, and retired, 'As for your lodging (said the Messinese), I know a chamber that will exactly fit you. But have you breakfasted?' (added he). When I answered in the negative, 'Ah, poor lad (said he), why did not you speak? Come, I will show you to a place where, thank heaven, you may have what you will for the asking.'

So saying, he carried me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a true Neapolitan, every whit as cunning as the Messinian. It might be said of him and the steward, *These two make a pair.* This honest butler, with five or six of his friends, were cramming themselves with ham, cold tongue, and other relishing bits, which obliged them to redouble their draughts. We joined these hearty cocks, and assisted them in their attacks upon the Count's best wines. While this scene passed in the buttery, another such was acted in the kitchen: the cook also treated three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who filled their bellies with rabbit and partridge pies: the very scullions enjoyed themselves on what they could pilfer; so that I thought myself in a house abandoned to pillage: yet these were but trifles, in comparison to what I did not see.

## CHAPTER XV

*Count Galiano invests Gil Blas with an employment in his house*

I WENT to fetch my baggage to my new habitation; and when I returned, the Count was at dinner, with several noblemen and the poet Nuñez, who called for what he wanted with an easy air, and mingled in the conversation. Nay, I observed that every word he spoke afforded pleasure to the company. What a fine thing is genius! A man of wit can easily turn himself into all shapes.

I dined with the officers, who were treated pretty much in the same manner as our patron; and in the afternoon retired to my chamber, where I began to reflect on my condition. 'Well, Gil Blas (said I to myself), thou art now in the service of a Sicilian Count, with whose real character thou art utterly unacquainted. If we may judge by appearance, thou wilt be in this family like a fish in the water: but we must swear to nothing; and thou oughtest to distrust thy fate, the malignity of which thou hast but too often experienced. Besides, thou dost not know for what employment thou art retained: he has already two secretaries and a steward; what service, then, does he expect from thee? It looks as if he intended to make thee his Mercury. In good time! One cannot be on a better footing with a nobleman, in order to make his way to a good post. He who limits himself to honourable services only, moves slowly, step by step, and seldom gains his point at last.

While I was engrossed by these fine reflections, a lackey came to tell me, that all the company who had dined at our house were gone home, and that the Count wanted to speak with me. I flew instantly to his apartment, where I found him lying on his couch, ready to take his afternoon's nap with his baboon, which always bore him company.

'Come hither, Gil Blas (said he), take a chair, and listen to what I am going to say.' I obeyed his orders, and he spoke to me in these terms: 'Don Fabricio has told me, that, among other good qualities, you possess that of attaching yourself to your masters; and that you are a young man of incorruptible integrity. These two qualifications determined me to take you into my service; for I have great occasion for an affectionate domestic, who will espouse my interest, and employ his whole attention in husbanding my estate. I am rich, 'tis true, but my yearly expense greatly exceeds my income. The reason is plain; I am plundered by my servants, and live in my own house as if I was in a forest among robbers. I suspect my butler and steward of having a fellow-feeling the one with the other; and this is more than enough to ruin me from top to bottom. You will say, if I have reason to think them rogues, why don't I turn them away? But where shall I find others made of a different kind of stuff? I will be satisfied with having them both observed by a man who shall have a right to inspect their conduct; and you are the person whom I have chosen for that commission; of which, if you acquit yourself well, be assured that you shall not serve an ungrateful master; for I will take care to procure for you a very advantageous settlement in Sicily.'

Having spoken thus, he dismissed me; and that very evening, in presence of all his domestics, I was proclaimed superintendent of the family. This did not give the Messinese and Neapolitan great mortification at first, because they looked upon me as a jolly companion, of a good composition; and concluded, that by giving me a share of the spoil, they should be allowed to go on in their old course. But they looked very silly next day, when I declared to them, that I was an enemy to all misdemeanour. I demanded of the butler an account of the provisions; I visited the cellar, and took an inventory of everything he had in his charge; I mean, table-linen and plate. I then

exhorted them to be saving of our patron's wealth, to lay out with economy; and ended my advice. by protesting to them, that I would inform that nobleman of everything that I should observe amiss in his house. I did not stop here; resolving to have a spy. who might discover if there was any sinister intelligence between them, I cast my eyes on a scullion, who being won by my promises, assured me, that I could not have applied to a more proper person, to get notice of everything that happened in the house: that the butler and steward were in a confederacy, and burnt the candle at both ends: that they daily secreted one half of the provision that was bought for the family: that the Neapolitan took care of a lady who lived opposite to the College of St. Thomas; and that the Messenian entertained another at the Sun-gate: that these two gentlemen sent all sorts of provision to their nymphs every morning: and that the cook, also, dispatched savoury messes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood: and that in consideration of his services to the other two, to whom he was entirely devoted, he disposed, as they did, of the wines in the cellar: in short, that these three domestics occasioned a most horrible expense in the Count's house. 'If you doubt my report (added the scullion), take the trouble of going to-morrow morning about seven o'clock to the College of St. Thomas, and you shall see me loaded with a basket, which will change your doubts into certainty.' 'So (said I to him), thou art agent to these gallant purveyors?' 'I am (he replied) employed by the butler, and one of my comrades acts for the steward.'

I had the curiosity to repair next morning, at the appointed hour, to the College of St. Thomas, where I did not wait long for my spy, whom I saw coming along with a huge basket filled with butchers' meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of the particulars, of which I made in my pocket-book a brief formal note, that I went and showed to my master, after having told the trencher-scraper that he might execute his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who was naturally passionate, resolved in his first transport to turn away the Neapolitan and Messenian; but after having reflected more coolly, contented himself with dismissing the last, to whose place I succeeded: so that my office of superintendent was suppressed soon after its creation: and truly I was not sorry for it; for it was, properly speaking, no other than the honourable employment of a spy; and a post which had nothing substantial in it: whereas, by being made steward, I became master of the strong box, and that is everything. The steward always possesses the first rank among the domestics of a great family: and there are so many small perquisites attached to his administration, that he may grow rich, even though he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, whose budget was not yet exhausted, observing my brutal zeal, that I got up every morning, to see and keep an account of what victuals were bought, no longer secreted a part; but the rascal continued to purchase the same quantity as before. By this stratagem, increasing the profit he drew from the refuse of the table, which was his perquisite, he found himself in a condition to treat his charmer at least with dressed victuals, if he could not furnish her with raw provision. In short, the devil lost nothing by this reformation, and the Count was not a whit the better for having the phoenix of stewards in his service. The superabundance that I then perceived at every meal, made me guess this new trick, which I immediately defeated, by retrenching what was superfluous in every course. This I did, however, with such prudence, that the alteration could not be perceived; one would have thought that there was still the same profusion: and yet, by this economy, I considerably diminished the expense. This was what my patron required; he wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent: for his avarice was subordinate to his ostentation.

There was also another abuse to be reformed: I

found the wine ran out apace: if, for example, twelve cavaliers happened to dine with my master, they would exhaust fifty, and sometimes five dozen of bottles. I was astonished at this waste, and not doubting that there must be some roguery in the case, consulted my oracle, that is, my drudge, with whom I very often had private conferences, and who made a faithful report of everything that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was not in the least suspected. He told me, that the waste of which I complained, proceeded from a new league between the butler, cook, and those lackeys who filled the wine, and who carried off all the bottles half emptied, which were afterwards shared among the confederates. I spoke to the footmen on this subject, and threatened to turn them out of doors, if ever they should think proper to repeat this practice: upon which, they were reclaimed. My master, whom I took care to advertise of the most minute things which I performed for his advantage, loaded me with praises, and grew every-day more and more fond of me: and I, in order to reward the good services of the scullion, created him cook's assistant.

The Neapolitan was enraged to find me always on the watch with him; and was cruelly mortified with the contradictions he underwent, whenever he presented his accounts to me: for, that I might pare his nails the closer, I took the trouble of going to market, to learn the price of meat, just before he went thither; and, as he attempted to impose upon me afterwards, gave him a vigorous repulse. I was very well persuaded, that he cursed me a hundred times a day; but the subject of his maledictions hindered me from dreading their force. I can't imagine how he could bear my persecutions, and remain in the service of the Sicilian nobleman. Doubtless, in spite of all my endeavours, he found his account in his perseverance.

Fabricio, whom I frequently saw, and to whom I recounted all my hitherto unheard exploits, in quality of steward, was more disposed to blame than applaud

my conduct. 'God grant (said he one day) that thou mayst be recompensed for all this disinterestedness; but between thee and me, I believe it would not fare the worse with thee, if thou wast not quite so rough with the butler.' 'How! (answered I) shall that robber charge in his bill ten pistoles for a fish that did not cost four, and I pass over that article?' 'Why not? (he replied coldly) let him give thee the half of the superplus, according to custom. In good faith, my friend (continued he, shaking his head), you are a mere ninny, and, in all appearance, will grow grey in servitude, since you neglect to flay the eel while it is in your hand. Take my word for it, fortune resembles those brisk airy coquettes who despise the gallant that stands upon ceremony.'

I only laughed at the discourse of Nuñez, who laughed again in his turn; and would have persuaded me that he had only spoken in jest, being ashamed of having given me bad counsel in vain. I continued firm in the resolution of being always zealous and faithful: I felt no inclination to be otherwise; and I dare say, that in four months I saved to my master, by my economy, three thousand ducats at least.

## CHAPTER XVI

*An accident happens to Count Galiano's baboon, which is the cause of great affliction to that nobleman. Gil Blas falls sick; the consequence of his distemper*

About this time, the repose of the family was strangely disturbed by an accident which will seem trifling to the reader; though it turned out a very serious matter to the servants, and especially to me: Cupid, that baboon of which I have made mention, that animal so beloved by our master, attempting one day to leap from one window to another, acquitted himself so ill in the performance, that he fell down into the court,

and dislocated his leg. The Count no sooner understood this misfortune, than he uttered such piercing cries, that they were heard all over the neighbourhood; and in the excess of his grief, attacking all his servants without exception, he had wellnigh made a clean house. His fury, however, was limited to cursing our negligences, and abusing us, without sparing terms of reproach. He sent immediately for those surgeons who were most expert in fractures and dislocated bones; and who, having examined the patient's leg, reduced it, and applied bandages accordingly. But though all of them assured him there was no danger, my master retained one of them in the house, to be always near the animal, until it was perfectly cured.

I should be to blame if I passed over in silence the grief and anxiety which preyed upon the heart of the Sicilian nobleman, during the whole time of the cure. Will it be believed, that all the day he did not stir from his dear Cupid? He was always present when it was dressed, and got out of bed to visit him two or three times every night. But the most troublesome circumstance of all was, that every domestic in the family, and I in particular, were always up, that we might be at hand, to be sent wheresoever it should be thought proper, for the service of this ape. In a word, we had no rest in the house, till such time as this plaguy beast, having recovered of his fall, betook himself again to his usual caperings and tumblings. After this, can we refuse to credit the report of Suetonius, when he says Caligula loved his horse[1] to such a degree, that he bestowed upon him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him, and even designed to make him consul? My patron was no less charmed with his baboon, which he would willingly have created a corregidor, had it been in his power.

An unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had surpassed all the valets in demonstrations of concern, that I might, in so doing, make my court to my master; and undergone such fatigue in behalf of Cupid, that I

[1] The name of this horse was 'Incitatus.'

fell sick upon it, and was seized with such a violent fever, that I lost my senses, and know not how I was managed for fifteen days; during which I was in a manner between life and death. This only I know, that my youth struggled so successfully against the fever, and perhaps against the remedies that were administered, that, at length, I recovered my understanding. The first use I made of it, was to perceive that I was not in my own chamber; and wanting to know the reason, I asked it of an old woman who attended me: but she replied, that I must not speak; for the physician had expressly forbid it. When we are in good health, we commonly laugh at the doctor; but when we are sick, we calmly submit to his prescription.

I thought proper, therefore, to hold my tongue, how much soever I longed to converse with my nurse; and was engaged in reflections on this subject, when two spruce beaux entered, dressed in velvet, with very fine ruffled linen. I imagined they were two noblemen, friends of my master, who out of consideration for him came to see me. On this supposition, I made an effort to sit up, and showed my respect by taking off my cap: but my nurse laid me all along again, and told me, that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor coming to the bedside, felt my pulse, considered my countenance, and observing all the symptoms of an immediate cure, assumed an air of triumph, as if he had greatly contributed to it: saying, that there was nothing wanting to finish the work but a purge; after which, he might boast of having performed a fine cure. When he had spoken thus, he made the apothecary write a prescription, which while he dictated, he viewed himself in a glass, adjusted his periwig, and made such grimaces, that I could not help laughing, in spite of my weakly condition. He then made me a solemn bow, and went away, much more engrossed by his own figure than by the medicines he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who had not

come thither for nothing, prepared himself for doing something, which may be easily guessed; whether he was afraid that the old woman could not acquit herself with dexterity enough, or wanted to operate himself, in order to enhance the value of his ware; but, with all his address, I don't know how it happened, the operation was scarce performed, when I restored to the operator all that he had given me, and left his velvet suit in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune annexed to pharmacy, and wiping himself with a towel, in silence, went away, resolving to make me pay the scourer, to whom he was certainly obliged to send his clothes.

He returned next morning, more plainly dressed, though he had no risk to run that day, in bringing the physic, which the doctor had prescribed the night before. For I not only felt myself mending every moment, but had such an aversion, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where those gentlemen receive the power of slaying men with impunity.

In this disposition, I swore that I would take no more medicine, and wished Hippocrates at the devil, with all his gang. The apothecary, who did not mind what became of his composition, provided he was paid for it, left it on the table, and retired, without speaking a word. I ordered the villainous medicine to be thrown out at a window immediately, being so much prepossessed against it, that I should have thought myself poisoned, had I swallowed it. To this stroke of disobedience I added another. I broke silence, and told my nurse, in a peremptory tone, that I absolutely insisted on knowing what was become of my master. The old woman, who was apprehensive of exciting in me a dangerous emotion, should she gratify my curiosity; or resolving, perhaps, to irritate my distemper by her obstinacy, made no answer; but I persisted with so much passion, that she replied, at length, 'Señor Cavalier, you are now your own master, Count Galiano is gone back to Sicily.'

I could not believe what I heard, and yet there was nothing more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my distemper, fearing that I would die at his house, had the generosity to order me to be transported, with my little effects, to a hired room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to Providence and the care of a nurse. In the interim, having received an order from Court, obliging him to repass into Sicily, he set out with such precipitation, that I was not so much as thought of; whether he already numbered me with the dead, or that people of quality are troubled with short memories.

My nurse informed me of all this, and likewise assured me, it was she who had called the physician and apothecary, that I might not perish for want of assistance. This comfortable news threw me into a profound reverie. Adieu, my advantageous settlement in Sicily! my sanguine hopes, farewell! 'When any great misfortune happens to you (says a certain Pope), examine yourself well, and you will always perceive that it was, in some measure, owing to your own fault.' No disparagement to this holy father, I can't see how I contributed to my own mischance on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras, with which I had stuffed my imagination, vanished, the next thing that I concerned myself about was my portmanteau, which I ordered her to bring to my bedside, that I might examine it. I sighed, when I perceived it open, crying, 'Ah! my dear portmanteau, my only consolation! you have been, I see, at the mercy of strangers.' 'No, no, Señor Gil Blas (said the old woman), don't be uneasy: nothing is stolen from you; I have protected your box, as if it had been my own honour.'

I found in it the suit of clothes which I had when I came into the Count's service, but I looked in vain for that which the Messinian had ordered to be made for me. My master had not thought proper to leave it with me, or else somebody had made free with it, during my delirium. All my other baggage remained,

and even a great leathern purse that contained my money, which I reckoned twice, as I could not, at first, believe that there were but fifty pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty, that were in it before I fell sick. 'What is the meaning of this, my good mother? (said I to the nurse). My finances are terribly diminished.' 'And yet nobody, except myself, has touched them (said the old woman), and I have been as frugal as possible: but sickness is very expensive; one is always laying out. Here (added the good mother, taking a packet of papers out of her pocket), here is an account of the expense, as just as the current coin, which will show that I have not employed a maravedi amiss.'

I glanced over the bill, which contained fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy upon me! what a quantity of poultry had been bought, while I was out of my senses. There was in broths only, to the amount of twelve pistoles, at least. The other articles were answerable to this. It can't be imagined, how much was laid out for wood, candles, water, and brooms. Nevertheless, swelled as this account was, the sum total did not exceed thirty pistoles, consequently there ought to be a remainder of one hundred and eighty. This I represented to her; but the beldame, with an air of devotion, began to take all the saints to witness, that there were but fourscore pistoles in the purse, when the Count's butler gave her the charge of my portmanteau. 'What is that you say, goody? (cried I, with precipitation). Was it the butler who put my things into your hands?' 'Without doubt, it was he (she replied), by this token, that when he gave me them, he said, "Good mother, when Señor Gil Blas is stiff, don't fail to treat him with a good funeral, for there is money enough in the portmanteau to answer the expense."'

Ah, damned Neapolitan! (cried I) I am no longer at a loss to know how my money is gone: you have swept it away, to make yourself some amends for the thefts I hindered you to commit. After this apostrophe, I thanked heaven that the knave had not carried off the whole. Whatever reason I had, how-

ever, to accuse the butler of having robbed me, I could not help thinking, that the nurse might, possibly, have done the deed. My suspicion fell sometimes on one, sometimes on the other; but it was still the same thing to me.

I said nothing to the old woman: I did not even cavil at the articles of her conscionable bill; for I should have got nothing by wrangling; and every one must understand his trade: my resentment, therefore, was contented with paying and dismissing her three days after.

I believe, when she went from me, she advertised the apothecary, that she had been dismissed, and that I was well enough to decamp, without taking my leave of him; for, in a moment after, he came to me, quite out of breath, and presented his bill, in which, under names that were utterly unknown to me, although I had been a physician, he had set down all the pretended medicines, with which he had furnished me, while I was out of my senses. This bill might be justly said to have been written in the true spirit of an apothecary; and accordingly we disputed about the payment of it. I insisted on his abating one-half of the sum he demanded: he swore he would not abate one maravedi. Considering, however, that he had to do with a young man who might give him the slip, by quitting Madrid that very day, he chose rather to be contented with what I offered, that is, three times the value of his drugs, than to run the risk of losing the whole. I gave him the money with infinite regret, and he retired, fully revenged for the small disgrace he had suffered on the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost at the same time; for those animals are always at the tail of one another. I paid him for his visits, which had been very numerous, and sent him away very well satisfied. But before he would leave me, in order to prove that he had earned his fees, he related all the mortal symptoms, which he had prevented, in my distemper: a task he performed in very learned terms, and with an agreeable air,

though it was altogether above my comprehension. When I had dispatched him, I thought I had got rid of all the ministers of the fates. But I was mistaken: a surgeon, whom I had never seen, entered my apartment, and having saluted me very respectfully, expressed great joy in seeing me out of danger; a deliverance which (he said) he attributed to two copious bleedings that he had performed, and some cupping-glasses which he had the honour to apply. This was another feather to be plucked from my wing: I was fain to pay tribute to the surgeon also. After so many evacuations, my purse became so feeble, that it was little better than a lifeless corse, so little of the radical moisture remained.

I began to lose courage, when I saw myself relapsing into a state of misery. I had, while I served my last masters, conceived too great affection for the conveniences of life, and could no longer, as formerly, look upon indigence with the eye of a cynic philosopher. I will own, however, that I was very much in the wrong, to let myself fall a prey to melancholy. After having so often experienced, that fortune no sooner overthrew than she raised me up again, I ought to have regarded the troublesome situation in which I was, as another introduction to prosperity.

THE END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK

# BOOK VIII

## CHAPTER I

*Gil Blas contracts a good acquaintance, and obtains a post that consoles him for Count Galiano's ingratitude. The history of Don Valerio de Luna*

My not having heard of Nuñez all this time, surprised me so much, that I concluded he must be in the country: and as soon as I could walk, went to his lodgings, where I understood that he had actually gone to Andalusia, three weeks before, with the Duke of Medina Sidonia. One morning, at waking, Don Melchor de la Ronda came into my head; and remembering that I had promised to him, while I was at Granada, to visit his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, I resolved to keep my promise that very day. Having got a direction to the house of Don Balthazar de Zúniga, I repaired thither, and asked for Señor Joseph Navarro, who soon appeared. When I saluted him, he received me politely, but coldly, although I had signified my name. I did not know how to reconcile this frozen reception with the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going away, with a resolution to save myself the trouble of a second visit, when, all of a sudden, assuming an open, smiling air, he cried, with a good deal of emotion, 'Ah! Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, pray pardon the reception I have given you. My memory had betrayed my inclination: I had forgotten your name, and little thought that you were the cavalier, of whom mention is made, in a letter which I received from Granada, about four months ago.

'How rejoiced am I to see you! (added he, throwing his arms about my neck, with transport). My uncle Melchor, whom I love and honour as a father, conjures me, if perchance I should have the honour of seeing you, to treat you in the same manner as if you were his son, and to employ, if there should be occasion, my own credit, and that of my friends, in your behalf. He has praised the qualities of your head and heart, in such terms as would have interested me in your favour, even if I had not been engaged thereto, by his recommendation. I beg, therefore, that you will look upon me, as a man to whom my uncle has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments with regard to you. I offer you my friendship, and I hope you will not refuse me yours.'

I answered with that gratitude which I owed to the polite behaviour of Joseph; and, like people of warmth and sincerity, we contracted an intimacy on the spot; and I did not scruple to disclose the situation of my affairs: which he no sooner heard than he said. 'I undertake to procure a place for you; and, in the meantime, don't fail to come and dine with me everyday. You will fare better here than at your eating-house.' The offer was too agreeable to a poor creature just come out of a fit of illness, who had been used to good living, to be rejected. I accepted the invitation, therefore, and recruited so well in that family, that, in fifteen days, I had the face of a Bernardine monk. Melchor's nephew seemed to make up his pack rarely: but how could it be otherwise? he had three strings to his bow; was, at the same time, butler, steward, and clerk of the kitchen; besides (our friendship apart), I believe the comptroller of the house and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly recovered, when my friend Joseph, seeing me come in one day, to dine as usual, made up to me, with a gay air, and said, 'Señor Gil Blas, I have a pretty good place in view for you. You must know that the Duke of Lerma, Prime Minister of the

Spanish crown, in order to devote himself entirely to affairs of state, entrusts two persons with his own concerns. Don Diego de Monteser has the care of gathering his rents; and his household expense is managed by Don Rodrigo de Calderon. These two men, in whom he can confide, exercise their employments with absolute authority, without the least dependence on one another. Don Diego usually keeps in his service two stewards to receive the cash; and as I understood, this morning, that he had dismissed one of them, I have been to ask the place for you. Señor de Monteser, who knows me, and of whose friendship I may boast, has granted it, without any difficulty, on my recommendation of your morals and capacity. We will go to his house this afternoon.'

We went thither accordingly. I was very graciously received, and installed in the employment of the steward, who had been dismissed. His office consisted in visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents: in a word, I was concerned in the country estate, and every month gave in my accounts to Don Diego, who examined them with great attention. This was what I wished. Although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was resolved to continue always in the same path.

One day having got notice that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than one half of it had been reduced to ashes, I went thither immediately, to take an account of the damage; and having informed myself exactly, on the spot, of all the circumstances of the fire, I composed an ample relation of it, which Monteser showed to the Duke of Lerma. This Minister, notwithstanding the affliction he was in, to hear such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author. Don Diego not only satisfied him in that particular, but also spoke so much in my favour, that his Excellency remembered me, six months after, on the occasion of a story, which I am going to recount, and without which,

perhaps, I should never have been employed at court. Here it is[1]:

At that time there lived in the Street of the Infantas, an old lady called Inesilla de Cantarilla, whose birth was not certainly known. Some said that she was the daughter of a lute-maker; and others, that her father was a commander of the order of Santiago. Be that as it will, she was a prodigy. Nature bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming the male sex, during the whole course of her life, which exceeded seventy-five years. She had been idolized by the noblemen of the old court, and saw herself adored by those of the new. Time, that spares not even beauty, had exerted itself upon hers in vain; though he had withered it, he could not deprive her of the power to please: a noble air, an enchanting wit, and graces that were peculiar to her, made her inspire the men with passion, even in her old age.

One of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, called Don Valerio de Luna, a cavalier of five-and-twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared himself in the most passionate terms, and pursued his prey with all the fury that love and youth can inspire. The lady, who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, did not know how to moderate his flame. One day, however, thinking she had found the means, she carried the young man into her closet, and pointing to a clock that stood upon a table, 'You see (said she) what hour it is—on the same day and hour did I come into the world, seventy-five years ago; and do you really think it becomes one of my age to be engaged in love intrigues? Recall your reason, my child, and stifle those sentiments which are so unsuitable both to

[1] A story precisely similar to that of Inesilla de Cantarilla and Don Valerio de Luna is told of Ninon de Lenclos and her son, the Chevalier de Villiers: see Antoine Bret, *Mémoires sur la vie de Mademoiselle de Lenclos* (Paris, 1751), pp. 96-97. Ninon died on October 17, 1705, and the tale was evidently current long before the Eighth Book of *Gil Blas* was published.

you and me.' At this sensible advice, the cavalier, who no longer acknowledged the authority of reason, answered the lady, with all the impetuosity of a man possessed by the most violent emotions. 'Cruel Inesilla! why have you recourse to such frivolous remonstrances? Do you imagine that they can change you in my eyes? Don't flatter yourself with such a vain hope. While you are such as I behold you, or while my view is fascinated by the charm, I cannot cease to love you.' 'Well, then (said she), since you are so obstinate as to persist in the resolution of fatiguing me with your addresses, my house shall be no longer open to you. I forbid you to come near it, and desire to see you no more.'

You will, perhaps, believe after this that Don Valerio, disconcerted at what he had heard, made an honourable retreat. On the contrary, he became still more importunate. Love produces the same effect in its votaries, as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged, sighed, and making a sudden transition from entreaties to rage, attempted to enjoy by force, what he could not otherwise obtain. But the lady resisting with courage, cried, with an air of indignation, 'Hold! rash wretch! I will soon bridle your impious ardour. Know that you are my son.' Don Valerio was confounded at these words, which suspended the violence of his passion. But imagining that Inesilla spoke thus, only to be rid of his solicitations, he answered, 'You have invented that fable to elude my desires.' 'No, no (said she, interrupting him), I reveal a mystery, which I should always have concealed, had not you reduced me to the necessity of disclosing it. Six-and-twenty years ago, I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia, and you became the fruit of our mutual passion. He owned you for his son, gave you a good education; and although he had not been without other children, your good qualities would have determined him to leave you a fortune. I, for my part, did not forsake you; as soon as you began to appear in the world, I allured you

to my house, in order to inspire you with that polite behaviour, which is so necessary to a gallant man, and which women only can bestow. I did more; I employed all my credit to introduce you into the Prime Minister's service. In short, I have interested myself for you, as I ought to do for a son. After this declaration, take your own measures. If you can purify your sentiments, and look upon me only as a mother, I do not banish you from my sight, but will treat you with all the tenderness I have hitherto preserved: but if you are incapable of that effort, which both nature and reason demand, fly this moment, and deliver me from the horror of your presence.'

While Inesilla spoke in this manner, Don Valerio remained in profound silence. He seemed to recall his virtue, and endeavour to vanquish himself: but he meditated another design, and prepared a quite different spectacle for his mother. Being unable to console himself for the insurmountable obstacle that opposed his wishes, he basely yielded to his despair: he drew his sword, and plunged it in his own bosom; punishing himself, like another Oedipus; with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes, out of grief for having committed the crime; whereas, the Castilian stabbed himself, because he could not commit it.

The unhappy Don Valerio did not die immediately of the blow he had given himself: but had time to repent, and ask pardon of heaven, for having taken away his own life. As he left, by his death, a vacancy in the post of secretary to the Duke of Lerma, that Minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, nor the good character he had heard of me, chose me to fill the place of this young gentleman.

## CHAPTER II

*Gil Blas is presented to the Duke of Lerma, who receives him into the number of his secretaries; sets him to work, and is satisfied with his performance*

MONTESER was the person who informed me of this agreeable news, and said, 'Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, I love you too well, not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You will not fail to make a fine fortune, provided you follow two pieces of advice which I have to give you. The first is, to appear so much attached to his Excellency, that he shall never doubt of your being entirely devoted to his will. And the second is, to make your court to Señor Don Rodrigo de Calderon; for that man moulds the mind of his master like wax. If you have the good fortune to acquire the goodwill of that favourite secretary, you will go a great way in a very little time.'

'Señor (said I to Don Diego, after having thanked him for his good advice), tell me, if you please, Don Rodrigo's character. I have often heard him spoken of, and represented bad enough; but I have not much confidence in the pictures which people draw of those who have posts at court; though sometimes, I believe, they do not judge amiss. Pray, tell me, then, what you think of Señor Calderon.' 'You ask me a very delicate question (replied the overseer, with a satirical smile), I would tell anybody but you, without hesitation, that he is a very honourable gentleman, of an unblemished character. But I will deal more frankly with you; for, besides that I believe you a young man of discretion, I think it my duty to talk openly to you of Don Rodrigo, since I have advised you to cultivate him with care; otherwise, I should only oblige you by halves.

'You must know, then, that from a simple domestic of his Excellency, when the latter was only Don Francisco

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de Sandoval, this man has arrived, by degrees, at the post of his first secretary. There never was a prouder man; he looks upon himself as the Duke of Lerma's colleague, and, at bottom, he may be said to share with him the authority of Prime Minister; since he bestows posts and governments on whom he pleases to oblige. This the public often murmurs at; but he gives himself no trouble about the matter: provided an affair yields him a handsome present, he bids defiance to censure. You will easily conceive, from what I have said (added Don Diego), how you are to behave to such a haughty mortal.' 'O yes! (said I) leave that to me. It will be very unlucky indeed, if I cannot gain his favour. When one knows the foible of a person whom he wishes to please, he must be no conjurer if he fails of success.' 'Well, then (replied Monteser), I will now present you to the Duke of Lerma.'

We went immediately to the house of that Minister, whom we found giving audience in a great hall, where there was more company than at court. Here I saw commanders and knights of Calatrava and Santiago, soliciting for governments and viceroyalties; bishops who, being sickly at their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops, only for the change of air; and some holy fathers, of the orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis, who laid claim to the mitre, with great humility. I likewise observed some half-pay officers, who acted the same part that Captain Chinchilla had formerly performed; that is, spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension. If the Duke did not gratify all their desires, he, at least, received their petitions with great affability; and I perceived that he answered very politely to those who spoke to him.

We waited patiently, until he had dispatched all these supplicants: then Don Diego said to him, 'My lord, here is Gil Blas de Santillana, that young man whom your Excellency has chosen to supply the place of Don Valerio.' At these words, the Duke casting his eyes upon me, said, in a very obliging manner,

that I had already merited it, by the services I had done him. He afterwards carried me into his closet, to discourse with me in private, or rather, judge of my understanding by my conversation. He desired to know who I was, and the life I had hitherto led, exacting of me a sincere narration of the whole. What a detail was this, for me to give! there was no thinking of telling lies before a Prime Minister of Spain. On the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve on a general confession. How should I extricate myself from this embarrassment? I took the resolution of embellishing the truth, in those parts where it would have offended in its nakedness; but he did not fail to discover it, in spite of all my skill. 'Señor de Santillana (said he, with a smile, when I had finished my story), I see you have been in your time a bit of a picaroon.' I answered, with a blush, 'Your Excellency ordered me to be sincere, and I have obeyed.' 'I am obliged to thee for it (he replied): go, my child, thou hast come off very cheaply. I am astonished that thou wast not undone by ill example. There are many honest people who would have turned great rogues, had fortune put them to the same trials.

'Friend Santillana (continued the Minister), forget thy past life; and remember, that thou now belongest to the King, in whose service thou wilt be employed for the future. Follow me, and I will make thee acquainted with the nature of thy office.' He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his own, where I saw, upon shelves, twenty thick registers in folio. 'It is here (said he) where thou must work. These registers compose a dictionary of all the noble families within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy. Every book contains, in alphabetical order, the abridged history of every gentleman; in which are recounted the services which he and his ancestors have performed to the state, as well as the affairs of honour in which they have been engaged. There is also mention made of their fortune, their

morals, and, in a word, of all their bad qualities: so that, when they come to solicit favours at court, I see, with one glance of my eye, whether or not they deserve them[1]. That I may have an exact information of all these things, I have pensionaries everywhere, who take care to get good intelligence, which they transmit to me in writing; but as their memorials are often diffuse, and stuffed with provincial modes of expression, they must be rendered more concise, and the diction polished; because his Majesty sometimes orders these registers to be read to him. In this work, which requires a perspicuous style, I will employ thee, this very moment.'

So saying, he took out of a portfolio, full of papers, a memorial, which he put into my hand; and went out of my closet, leaving me at liberty to perform my *coup d'essai*. I read the piece, which seemed not only stuffed with barbarous terms, but even filled with indecent passion; though it had been composed by a monk in the town of Solsona. He there tore to pieces, without mercy, a good Catalonian family; and God knows if he spoke truth: it looked so much like a scandalous libel, that I at first made some scruple of working upon it; being afraid of making myself an accomplice in the calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I was at court, I went on, at the hazard of his reverence's soul; and placing all the iniquity, if there was any in the case, to his account, began to dishonour, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of honest men, perhaps.

I had already finished four or five pages, when the Duke, impatient to know how I performed, returned and said, 'Santillana, show me what thou hast done; for I long to see it.' At the same time, throwing his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning with great attention; and seemed so well satisfied, that I was

[1] Lesage most likely had in mind the registers drawn up by the *Intendants* in 1698 at the request of the Duc de Bourgogne: extracts are given by the Comte de Boulainvilliers in *L'État de la France* (Paris, 1737).

surprised at his commendation. 'Prepossessed as I was in thy favour (said he), I confess thou hast surpassed my expectation: thou writest not only with all the clearness and distinction that I desired, but thy style is also spirited and easy: thou justifiest the choice I have made of thy pen, and consolest me for the loss of thy predecessor.' He would not have confined my eulogium to this, had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his nephew, the Count de Lemos[1], whom his Excellency embraced several times, and received in such a manner, as gave me to understand that he loved him with a tender affection. They shut themselves up together, to talk in private of a family affair, which I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel; and with which the Minister, at that time, seemed to be more engrossed, than with the business of the King.

While they were engaged together, I heard the clock strike twelve; and as I knew that the secretaries and clerks quitted their offices at that hour, to go and dine somewhere, I left my performance, and went out, not with a view of going to Monteser's house, for he had already paid my appointments, and I had taken my leave of him, but to the most famous ordinary of the court-end of the town: a common eating-house would not now serve my turn. *Remember that thou now belongest to the King.* These words, which the Duke had pronounced, were seeds of ambition that every instant sprung up in my soul.

[1] The Count de Lemos was both nephew and son-in-law of the Prime Minister; his mother was Lerma's sister, and his wife was Lerma's second daughter.

## CHAPTER III

*He learns that his post is not altogether without mortifications. His uneasiness at this piece of news, which obliges him to alter his conduct*

I was at great pains, when I entered, to let the landlord know that I was secretary to the Prime Minister; and in that quality, I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid of bespeaking something that might savour of parsimony, and therefore bade him dress what he himself should think proper. Accordingly, he regaled me in a sumptuous manner, and I was served with marks of respect which gave me still more pleasure than the good cheer. When the bill was brought, I threw a pistole upon the table, leaving to the waiters one-fourth of it at least; for so much remained over and above the reckoning. After which, I strutted away with such gestures as showed that I was mighty well pleased with my own person.

About twenty yards from hence, there was a large house, in which noblemen that were strangers commonly lodged. Here I hired an apartment, consisting of five or six rooms handsomely furnished, as if I had already enjoyed two or three thousand ducats a year; and even paid the first month per advance. Afterwards, returning to work, I spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. There were two more secretaries in a closet next to mine; but they only transcribed what the Duke gave them to copy. With these I contracted an acquaintance that very evening, when we went out together; and, in order to gain their friendship the sooner, carried them to my tavern, where I ordered for supper the best dishes in season, with the most delicate wines.

We sat down together, and began to converse with more gaiety than wit; for to do justice to my guests, I soon perceived that they did not owe to their genius the places which they possessed. They were con-

noiseurs, indeed, in the different kinds of hand-writing; but they had not the least tincture of university education.

To make amends for this, they understood their own little interest to admiration; and were not so much intoxicated with the honour of serving the Prime Minister, but that they complained of their situation. 'We have (said one of them) already exercised our employment five months at our own expense, without drawing one farthing; and, which is worse, our appointments are not regulated; nor do we know upon what footing we are.' 'As for my part (said the other), I would with all my heart put up with twenty stripes, instead of appointments, to be allowed the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for I dare not retire of my own accord, nor demand my discharge, after the secrets with which I have been entrusted; else I might chance to visit the tower of Segovia, or castle of Alicante.'

'How do you make shift to live, then? (said I to them) I suppose you have fortunes of your own.' They answered, they had very little money; but, luckily for them, they lodged at the house of an honest widow, who gave them credit for their board, at the rate of one hundred pistoles a year from each. All this discourse, of which I did not lose one word, dissipated in an instant the fumes of my pride: I concluded, that no more consideration would be paid to me than to others; consequently, I had no cause to be so much charmed with my post, which was not quite so substantial as I had imagined; and that, in short, I could not be too frugal of my purse. These reflections cured me of my extravagance. I began to repent of having invited my fellow-secretaries, wished the repast at an end; and, when the bill was brought, disputed with the landlord on every article.

My friends and I parted at midnight; because I did not press them to stay longer. They went home to their widow, and I to my superb apartment, which I now was mad with myself for having hired; and which

I firmly resolved to leave at the month's end. It was to no purpose for me to lie down on a good bed; my anxiety banished all repose; and I passed the night in contriving means of being paid by his Majesty for my work. I stuck, on this occasion, to Monteser's advice, and rose with a resolution of going to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderon. I was in a very proper disposition to appear before such a proud man, because I found I had occasion for his protection.

I repaired then to the secretary, whose lodging communicated with that of the Duke of Lerma, and even equalled it in magnificence: by the furniture, it would have been a difficult matter to distinguish the master from the man. I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio; but, for all that, I waited in the antechamber upwards of an hour. 'New Mr. Secretary (said I to myself at this juncture), have a little patience, if you please: I find you must dance attendance yourself, before you make other people do so.' The chamber-door being opened at length, I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who having just finished a *billet-doux* to his charming Sirena, was putting it into Pedrillo's hands. I had never appeared before the Archbishop of Granada, the Count Galiano, nor even the Prime Minister, so respectfully as I presented myself to the eyes of Señor de Calderon, whom I saluted with a bow to the very ground, begging his protection in such submissive terms, that I cannot remember them without a blush. My meanness would have turned to my prejudice, in the opinion of a real gentleman; but he was pleased with my grovelling behaviour, and assured me, obligingly enough, that he would let slip no opportunity of doing me service.

I thanked him with great demonstrations of zeal for his favourable sentiments of me; and having vowed eternal attachment to him, took my leave for fear of incommoding him; and begged he would excuse me, if I had interrupted him in his important affairs. As soon as I had acted this mean part, I went to my office, where I finished the task which had been

imposed. The Duke, who did not fail to come thither in the morning, was no less pleased with the end, than he had been with the beginning of my work; and said: 'This is extremely well: write as well as thou canst this abridged history in the register of Catalonia: after which, thou shalt take another information out of the portfolio, and manage it in the same manner.' I had a pretty long conversation with his Excellency, and was charmed with his sweetness, and familiarity of behaviour. What a difference was there between him and Calderon! They were two figures strongly contrasted.

I dined that day in an eating-house for a moderate expense; and resolved to go thither incognito every evening, until I should see the effect of my complaisance and servility. I had money sufficient to maintain me three months, during which I resolved to work at a venture; proposing, as the shortest follies are the least prejudicial, to abandon the court and all its tinsel, if I should receive no salary before the expiration of that term. This, therefore, was my plan. I spared nothing, during two months, to please Calderon; but he took so little notice of my endeavours, that despairing of success, I changed my conduct towards him; and exerted myself wholly in profiting by those moments of conversation which I had with the Duke.

## CHAPTER IV

*Gil Blas gains the favour of the Duke of Lerma, who entrusts him with a secret of great importance*

Although his Grace, to use the expression, only just appeared before me, and vanished again, everyday, I insensibly rendered myself so agreeable to his Excellency, that he said to me one afternoon, 'Hark ye, Gil Bas, I like thy disposition and understanding, and have a regard for thee accordingly. Thou art a zealous,

faithful young fellow, extremely intelligent and discreet; so that I don't think I shall misplace my confidence, if I bestow it upon thee.' I threw myself on my knees, when I heard these words; and after having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me up, answered, 'Is it possible, then, that your Excellency can deign to honour me with such extraordinary favour? What secret enemies will your goodness raise up against me! But there is only one man whose hatred I dread, and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderon.'

'Thou hast nothing to apprehend from that quarter (replied the Duke): I know Calderon; he has been attached to me from his infancy; and I may venture to say, his sentiments are so conformable to mine, that he caresses those whom I love, and hates those who disoblige me: instead of dreading his aversion, thou mayst, on the contrary, depend upon his friendship.' By this, I could plainly perceive, that Señor Don Rodrigo was a cunning rogue, who had got possession of his Excellency's soul; and that I could not be too cautious with him. 'To begin (added the Duke) with putting thee in possession of my confidence, I will disclose to thee a design which I have projected; for it is necessary that thou shouldst be informed of it, that thou mayst acquit thyself the better of the commissions in which I intend to employ thee. I have a long time beheld my authority in general respected, my decisions blindly followed, and commissions, employments, governments, viceroyalties, and benefices, disposed of, according to my wish. I may be said to reign in Spain; and it is impossible to push my fortune farther: but I would secure it against the storms that begin to threaten me; and, for that effect, want to have my nephew, the Count de Lemos, for my successor in the ministry.'

Here the Duke, observing that I was extremely surprised at what I heard, said: 'I see your surprise, Santillana; you think it very strange that I should prefer my nephew to my own son, the Duke of Uceda:

but you must know, that this last has too narrow a genius to fill my place; besides, I am his enemy: he has found the secret of being agreeable to the King, who wants to make him his favourite; and this is what I cannot bear. The favour of a sovereign is like the possession of a woman whom we adore: a piece of happiness of which we are so jealous, that we cannot resolve to share it with a rival, however connected to us by the ties of blood and friendship.

'I now disclose to thee (continued his Grace) the very bottom of my soul. I have already attempted to ruin the Duke of Uceda with his Majesty; and as I could not succeed, I have changed my battery. I design that the Count de Lemos shall insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being gentleman of his bed-chamber, he has an opportunity of talking with him every moment; and besides that he does not want wit, I know a sure method for him to succeed in that enterprise. By this stratagem, I will oppose my nephew to my son, and breed a division between the two cousins, which will oblige them both to court my support, the awe of which will keep them submissive to my will. This (added he) is my scheme; and thy assistance will be very serviceable to me: for I will always send thee to the Count de Lemos, and thou shalt report from him whatever he shall have occasion to impart.'

After this confidence, which I regarded as ready money, I no longer felt any disquiet. 'At length (said I to myself), I am under the spout; a shower of gold will certainly rain upon me; for it is impossible but that the confidant of a man, who, by way of excellence, is called the great pillar of the Spanish monarchy, should be in a very short time loaded with wealth.' Full of such agreeable hope, I saw with indifference my poor purse giving up the ghost.

## CHAPTER V

*Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy, honour, and distress*

The Minister's affection for me was soon perceived; for he affected to give marks of it in public, giving me the charge of his portfolio, which he used to carry in his own hand to council. This novelty making people look upon me as a small favourite, excited the envy of several persons; and was the occasion of my receiving a great deal of Court holy water. My two neighbours, the secretaries, were not the last in complimenting me upon my approaching greatness; and they invited me to sup at their widow's, not so much in return for my treat, as with a view to engage me in their behalf for the future. I was welcomed everywhere; even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behaviour to me, and now called me nothing but Señor de Santillana; though, before that, he only favoured me with *you*, always omitting the term *Señor*. He loaded me with civilities, especially when he thought our patron might observe him: but I assure you he had no fool to deal with; I answered all his kindness with equal politeness; and the more so, the more I hated him in my heart: an old courtier could not have excelled me in this particular.

I likewise accompanied my Lord Duke to Court, whither he commonly went three times a day. In the morning, he entered his Majesty's bed-chamber as soon as he was awake; and kneeling by the bedside, discoursed of those things that were to be done in the day; having also dictated to his master what was to be said, he retired; and returned immediately after dinner, not to talk on state affairs, but to converse on entertaining subjects, and regale the King with all the merry adventures which happened in Madrid, and of which he was always very early informed. Last of all, he visited him, for the third time, in the evening, when he gave such an account as he thought proper

of what he had done through the day, and in a careless manner asked his Majesty's orders for to-morrow. While he was with the King, I remained in the antechamber, where I saw people of quality, devoted to the idol Favour, court my conversation, and think themselves happy, if I entered into discourse with them. How, after this, could I help thinking myself a man of consequence? There are a great many at Court who have the same opinion of themselves, upon a much more slender foundation.

One day, I had still more food for my vanity: the King, to whom the Duke had spoken very advantageously of my style, was very curious to see a specimen of it. Upon which, his Excellency made me take up the Catalonian register, and carrying me into the presence, ordered me to read the first story which I had abridged. If I was at first disturbed by the presence of the King, I was soon composed by that of the Minister; and read my performance, which his Majesty heard with pleasure. He expressed his satisfaction, and even recommended me to the Minister's protection. This did not at all diminish the pride of my heart; and the conversation which I had a few days after with the Count de Lemos quite filled my head with the ideas of ambition. I went to this nobleman from his uncle, and finding him at the Prince of Spain's Court, presented to him a letter of credentials; in which the Duke told him, that he might open himself to me, as to one who was perfectly well acquainted with their design, and chosen by him as their common messenger. The Count having read this billet, conducted me into a room, and having locked the door, spoke in this manner: 'Since you enjoy the confidence of the Duke of Lerma, I don't doubt that you deserve it; and I ought to make no difficulty in giving you mine also. You must know, then, that matters go on swimmingly. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and who study to please him. I had this morning a private conversation with him, in which he seemed chagrined at seeing himself,

through the King's avarice, unable to follow the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend like a Prince. On this occasion, I did not fail to lament his situation; and profiting by the opportunity, promised to bring a thousand pistoles to him at his *lever* to-morrow, as an earnest of greater sums which I have undertaken to furnish him with in a very little time. He was charmed with my promise; and I am certain of captivating his favour, if I keep my word. Go and tell these circumstances to my uncle, and return in the evening, to inform me of his sentiments of the matter.'

I quitted the Count de Lemos immediately, and went back to the Duke of Lerma, who, on my report, sent to Calderon for a thousand pistoles, which he gave me to carry in the evening to the Count. This I performed; saying to myself, 'Oho! I now see plainly what the infallible method is which the Minister takes to succeed in his enterprise: upon my soul! he is in the right; and, to all appearance, these prodigalities will not ruin his fortune: I can easily guess from whose coffers these pistoles are taken: but after all, it is but reasonable that the father should maintain the son.' The Count de Lemos, when we parted, said softly, 'Farewell, dear confidant; the Prince of Spain is a little amorous: you and I must have a conference on that subject one of these days: I foresee that I shall have occasion for your dexterity very soon.' I came home musing on these words, which were not at all ambiguous, and which filled me with joy. 'The devil! (said I) I am just on the eve of becoming Mercury to the heir of the kingdom.' I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office; the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great Prince!' 'Softly, Mr. Gil Blas (some folks will say), the business was only to make you deputy-minister.' I own it: but at bottom the honour of both these posts is equal, the difference lies in the profits only.

While I executed these noble commissions, advancing

every day farther and farther in the good graces of the Prime Minister; with such enchanting hopes, how happy should I have been, if ambition had secured me from the cravings of hunger! More than two months had elapsed since I had quitted my magnificent apartment, and hired a small chamber very frugally furnished. Although this gave me some pain, as I came out early in the morning, and did not go home to bed before night, I bore my fortune patiently. The whole day I appeared upon my theatre, that is, in the Duke's house, and played the part of a man of consequence: but when I had crept up into my garret, my importance vanished, and nothing remained but poor Gil Blas without money; and, which is worse, without anything that could fetch it. Though I had not been too proud to discover my necessity to anybody, I did not know one person that could assist me, except Navarro, whom I had neglected so much, since I turned courtier, that I had not assurance enough to make application to his friendship. I had been obliged to sell all my clothes piecemeal, except those for which I had absolute occasion. I went no more to the eating-house, because I had not wherewithal to pay my ordinary. How did I make shift, then, to subsist? Every morning a little bread and wine was brought into our offices for breakfast: this was all that the Minister allowed: this was all I ate through the day; and I generally went supperless to bed.

Such was the situation of a man who shone at Court, and who was more properly an object of compassion than envy. Nevertheless, I could no longer sustain the weight of my misery; and at length determined to disclose it, with address, to the Duke of Lerma, as soon as an opportunity should offer. Happily for me, I found an occasion at the Escorial, whither the King and Prince repaired, some days after I had come to this resolution.

## CHAPTER VI

*The manner in which Gil Blas informs the Duke of Lerma of his necessity, and that Minister's behaviour on the occasion*

WHILE the King was at the Escorial, he defrayed the expense of everybody; so that there I did not feel where the shoe pinched: I lay in a wardrobe, just by the bed-chamber of the Duke; who, one morning, rising as usual at break of day, made me take some papers and a standish, and follow him into the palace-garden. We went and sat down under a tuft of trees, where I put myself, by his order, into the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; while he held in his hand a paper, which he pretended to read: so that, at a distance, we seemed busy in very serious affairs, though all the while we talked of nothing but trifles.

For the space of an hour, I had diverted his Excellency with all the sallies that my good-humour could afford, when two magpies perching on the trees under which we sat, began to chatter in such a noisy manner, as attracted our attention. 'These birds (said the Duke) seem to scold one another: I should be very glad to know the cause of their quarrel.' 'My lord (said I), your curiosity puts me in mind of an Indian fable, which I have read in Pilpay, or some other author of that kind[1].' The Minister desired to hear it, and I recounted it in these words:

'Heretofore a good monarch reigned in Persia, whose genius being not quite extensive enough to govern

[1] This fable does not occur in Bidpai (or Pilpay). It bears a certain resemblance to the twenty-first apologue in *El Conde Lucanor*, composed by the Infante Don Juan Manuel about 1342, and first issued by Gonzalo Argote de Molina at Seville in 1575. For oriental sources and parallels, see the note by Hermann Knust and Adolf Birch-Hirschfeld in their edition of *El Conde Lucanor* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 352.

his kingdom of himself, he left that care to his grand vizier Atalmuc[1], a man of superior capacity, who supported the weight of that vast monarchy, without stooping, and maintained it in profound peace. He had even the art of making the royal authority loved, as well as feared; and the subjects enjoyed an affectionate father in a vizier, who was faithful to his Prince. Atalmuc had, among his secretaries, a young Kashmirian, called Zeangir, whom he loved more than all the others. He took pleasure in his conversation, carried him in his company to the chase, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day, while they hunted together in a wood, the vizier seeing two ravens croaking on a tree, said to his secretary, "I wish I knew what these birds are talking of, in their language." "Señor (answered the Kashmirian), your wish may be accomplished." "How can that be?" (replied Atalmuc). "A cabalistical dervish (said Zeangir) taught me the language of birds. If you please, I will listen to these, and repeat to you verbatim everything that I shall hear."

'The vizier consented; and the Kashmirian approaching the ravens, seemed to lend an attentive ear to their discourse: after which, returning to his master, "Señor (said he), would you believe it? we are the subject of their conversation." "Impossible (cried the Persian Minister); what can they say of us?" "One of them (replied the secretary) said, 'Behold the Grand Vizier Atalmuc in person, that tutelar eagle, who covers Persia like a nest with his wings, and incessantly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his painful toils, he hunts in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy is that secretary in serving a master who has so much affection for him!' 'Softly (said the other raven), softly; don't too much extol

[1] The name probably derives from the *Histoire du Roy Bedreddin Lolo et de son Visir Atalmulc, surnommé le Visir triste* in the younger François Pétis de la Croix's *Contes Persans* (Paris, 1729). Lesage seems to have collaborated in this translation.

the happiness of that Kashmirian: Atalmuc, 'tis true, converses familiarly with him, honours him with his confidence, and, I don't doubt, intends to give him a considerable post: but, before that happens, Zeangir will die of hunger. That poor devil lodges in a small paltry room, where he is in want of the common necessaries of life. In a word, he lives in a miserable manner, though nobody at Court perceives it. The Grand Vizier never thinks of inquiring into his circumstances; but, content with entertaining favourable sentiments in his behalf, leaves him, in the meantime, a prey to poverty."'

Here I left off speaking, in order to observe the Duke, who asked, with a smile, what impression the apologue made on the mind of Atalmuc, and if the Grand Vizier was not offended at the presumption of his secretary. 'No, my lord (said I, in great confusion at his question), the fable says, that, on the contrary, he loaded him with favours.' 'That was lucky (replied the Duke, with a serious air); some Ministers would not like to be so schooled. But (added he, breaking off the discourse, and getting up) I believe the King will soon be awake, and my duty obliges me to be near him.' So saying, he walked hastily towards the palace, without speaking another word, and very ill-pleased, as I imagined, with the Indian fable.

I followed him to the very door of his Majesty's bed-chamber; after which, I went and put the papers into the place from whence I had taken them, and then entered the closet where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they were also along with us. 'What is the matter with you, Señor de Santillana? (said they, when they saw me) you seem very much disturbed! Has any disagreeable accident happened to you?'

I was too much affected with the bad success of my apologue to conceal my grief: I recounted to them what I had said to the Duke; and they expressed their sympathy in the sharp affliction with which I was seized. 'You have great reason to be grieved (said

one of them); I wish you may be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinola, who, tired with having received nothing during fifteen months in which he was employed by his Eminence, took the liberty, one day, of representing his necessity, and craving some money for his subsistence. "It is but just (said the Minister), that you should be paid. Here, (added he, giving him an order for a thousand ducats), go and receive that sum from the royal treasury; but remember, at the same time, that I have no further occasion for your service." The secretary would have consoled himself for his dismissal, had he touched his thousand ducats, and been allowed to seek for business elsewhere; but, just as he went out of the Cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and conducted to the tower of Segovia, where he has been prisoner a long time.'

This touch of history redoubled my fear; I believed myself undone; and becoming inconsolable, began to reproach my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. 'Alas! (said I) why did I risk that unlucky fable which has displeased the Minister? Perhaps he was just on the point of extricating me out of my miserable situation—nay, perhaps I was on the eve of making one of those sudden fortunes which astonish mankind. What riches! what honours have I lost by my own folly! I ought to have considered, that great men don't choose to be anticipated, but desire that the least gratifications they are obliged to give, should be received as their own free grace and favour. It would have been better for me to continue my slender regimen, without complaining to the Duke, and even to let myself die of hunger, by which means the blame would have lain on his side.

If I had even preserved some sparks of hope, my master, whom I saw in the afternoon, would have banished them entirely; he was very serious with me, contrary to custom, and scarce spoke at all; a circumstance that threw me into mortal disquiet for the rest of the day; neither did I pass the night in more

tranquillity, my sorrow for seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the dread of increasing the number of state prisoners, made me groan and lament my condition till morning.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The Duke ordered me to be called in the morning, and I entered his chamber, trembling like a criminal who is going to receive sentence. 'Santillana (said he, showing a paper which he held in his hand), take this order.' I quaked at the word 'Order,' saying to myself, 'O heaven! behold Cardinal Spinola! the carriage is ready for Segovia.' The terror which seized me, was such, that I interrupted the Minister, and throwing myself at his feet, 'My lord (said I, all in tears), I most humbly beg, that your Excellency will pardon my presumption: it was necessity alone that compelled me to disclose my situation.'

The Duke, who could not help laughing at my disorder, answered, 'Be comforted, Gil Blas, and listen to what I am going to say. Although the discovering thy necessities was a reproach to me for not having prevented them, I am not at all disobliged, my friend; I am rather angry with myself for having omitted to ask how thou livest. But to begin with making amends for this inattention, I give thee this order for fifteen hundred ducats, which will be paid upon sight, out of the royal treasury. This is not all; I promise thee the same sum annually, and besides, when people of wealth and generosity solicit thy interest, I do not forbid thee to speak in their behalf.'

In the ecstasy occasioned by these words, I kissed the feet of the Minister, who having commanded me to rise, continued to discourse with me in a familiar manner. I attempted to recall my good-humour, but I could not make such a sudden transition from grief to joy. I was as much confounded as a wretch who is informed of his pardon, in the very minute when he expected his execution. My master ascribed all this agitation to the fear of having incurred his displeasure, though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no

less a share in my discomposure. He confessed that he had affected coolness towards me, to see whether or not I should be afflicted at the change; that from this he was convinced of my sincere attachment to his person, for which he loved me the more.

## CHAPTER VII

*The good use to which he put his fifteen hundred ducats; the first affair in which he intermeddled, and the profit from thence accruing*

The King, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience, returned the very next day to Madrid; upon which, I flew instantly to the royal treasury, where I immediately touched the sum contained in my order. I now listened to nothing but my vanity and ambition; I abandoned my miserable room to those secretaries who are still ignorant of the language of birds, and once more hired my fine apartment, which was luckily untenanted. I sent for a famous tailor, who worked for almost all the beaux; he took my measure, and carried me to a shop where he took off five ells of cloth, which (he said) was barely sufficient to make a suit for me. Five ells for a suit in the Spanish taste! just heaven!—but let us spare our censure. Tailors of reputation always use more than others. I then bought some linen which I wanted very much, silk stockings, and a beaver laced with *point d'Espagne*. This being done, I thought it would not look well for me to be without a lackey, and desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to accommodate me with one of his own recommendation. Most of the strangers who lodged with him, used, on their arrival at Madrid, to take Spanish valets into their service, by which means, his house was the rendezvous of all the lackeys out of place. The first that presented himself was a young fellow of such a soft, devout appearance, that I would have nothing to do with him; he looked too much like

Ambrose de Lamela. 'I don't want (said I to Forero) a valet of such a religious deportment; I have been already bit by such another.' Scarce had I dismissed this lackey, when another came in, of a very sprightly appearance, as impudent as a Court page, with something roguish in his looks. Pleased with his outside, I put some questions to him, which he answered with spirit. I observed that he was of an intriguing disposition, and looking upon him as a subject pat for my purpose, engaged him immediately. I had no cause to repent of my choice, nay, I perceived, in a very little time, that I had made an admirable acquisition. As the Duke had permitted me to speak to him, in favour of people whom I wanted to serve (and I was resolved not to neglect this permission), I had occasion for a pointer to discover the game; that is, an industrious, pleasant fellow proper to find out, and allure those who had favours to ask of the Prime Minister. This office was quite the masterpiece of Scipio (such was my lackey's name), who had been in the service of Doña Anna de Guevara, nurse to the Prince of Spain, where he had exercised that talent to some purpose.

As soon as he understood my credit, and that I should be glad to use it, to the best advantage, he went to work, and that very day said to me, 'Señor, I have made a pretty good discovery; a young gentleman of Granada, called Don Roger de Rada, is come to Madrid on an affair of honour, which obliges him to solicit the Duke of Lerma's protection, and he is willing to pay well for the favour he shall obtain; I have already spoken with him, and found him desirous of applying to Don Rodrigo de Calderon, whose power he had heard greatly extolled; but I have changed his intention, by assuring him that Calderon sells his good offices at an extravagant rate; whereas, you content yourself with a moderate gratification for yours, and that you would even employ them gratis, were you in a situation that permitted you to follow your generous and disinterested inclination; in short, I spoke to him in such a manner, as that you will see the gentleman

at your *lever* to-morrow morning.' 'How! (said I) Mr. Scipio, you have already done a great deal of work. I perceive that you are no novice in matters of intrigue; and am surprised that you have not made your fortune.' 'That ought not to surprise you (he replied); I love to make money circulate, and never hoard up what I get.'

Don Roger de Rada actually came to my lodgings, and I received him with politeness mixed with pride. 'Señor Cavalier (said I), before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honour that brings you to Court; for it may be of such a nature, that I dare not speak to the Prime Minister in your behalf; make, therefore, if you please, a faithful report of it, and be assured that I will enter warmly into your interests, provided a man of honour may espouse them.' 'With all my heart (replied the young Granadine), I will sincerely recount my story.' At the same time, he related it, as follows.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The history of Don Roger de Rada*[1]

Don Anastasio de Rada, a Granadine gentleman, lived happily in the town of Antequera, with Doña Estephania his wife, who, together with unblemished virtue, possessed a gentle disposition and a great share of beauty. If she had a tender affection for her husband, he was also distractedly fond of her, and being naturally addicted to jealousy (though he had not the least cause to suspect her fidelity), was not without disquiet. He was afraid that some secret enemy of his repose made attempts upon his honour; he distrusted all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who had free access to his house, in quality of Estephania's cousin, and who, indeed, was the only man he ought to have suspected.

[1] This is an adaptation of Cornelio's story in *Marcos de Obregon*, Relacion III, Descanso vii.

Don Huberto actually fell in love with his kinswoman, and had presumption enough to declare his passion, without regard to ties of blood, or the particular friendship subsisting between him and Anastasio. The lady being a woman of discretion, instead of making a discovery which might have been attended with melancholy consequences, reprimanded her relation with gentleness, represented to him how much he was to blame, in attempting to seduce her and dishonour her husband; and told him very seriously, that he must not flatter himself with the hope of success.

This moderation served only to inflame the cavalier the more; and imagining that he must push things to extremity with a woman of her character, he began to behave very disrespectfully to her, and one day had the audacity to press her to satisfy his desire. She repulsed him with an air of severity, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rashness. The gallant, terrified at this menace, promised to speak no more of his passion, and on the faith of that promise, Estephania pardoned what was past.

Don Huberto, who was naturally a very wicked man, could not behold his love so ill repaid, without conceiving a base desire of being revenged. He knew the jealous temper of Don Anastasio to be susceptible of any impression which he had a mind to give; and he needed no more than this intelligence to form the blackest design that ever entered into the heart of a villain. One evening, while he and this weak husband were walking together, by themselves, he said to him, with a melancholy air, 'My dear friend, I can no longer live without revealing to you a secret, which I would have kept for ever from your knowledge, were not your honour dearer to you than your repose; but your delicacy and mine in point of injuries, permits me not to conceal what passes at your house; prepare to hear a piece of news, which will give you as much sorrow as surprise, for I must touch you in the tenderest part.'

'I understand you (said Don Anastasio, already discomposed), your cousin is unfaithful.' 'I no longer own her for my cousin (replied Hordales, with an air of indignation), I renounce her: for she is unworthy of such a husband.' ''Tis too much to make me languish in this manner (cried Don Anastasio): speak: what has Estephania done?' 'She has betrayed you (answered Huberto); you have a rival, whom she entertains in private: but I know not his name; for the adulterer, by the favour of a dark night, concealed his person from those who observed his retreat. All I know is, that you are deceived: that I am certain of. The concern which I ought to have in this affair, but too well verifies my report. Since I declare myself against Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity.

'It is in vain (added he, observing that his discourse had the desired effect), it is in vain for me to tell you more. I perceive that you don't deserve the ingratitude with which your love is repaid; and that you meditate just vengeance on the guilty. I will not oppose your design. Never examine who the victim is, whom you intend to strike; but show to the whole city, that there is nothing which you cannot sacrifice to your honour.'

The traitor thus animated a too credulous husband against an innocent wife, and painted, in such lively colours, the infamy with which he would be covered if he should leave the injury unpunished, that he grew mad with revenge. Don Anastasio having lost his judgement, seemed actuated by the furies, and went home, with a resolution to stab his unhappy wife, who was just going to bed when he came in. He constrained himself at first, and waited until the servants were withdrawn: then, unrestricted by the fear of heaven's wrath, by the dishonour he was going to reflect upon his family, and even by the natural pity which he ought to have felt for an infant, which his wife had already carried six months in her womb, he approached the victim, saying, in a furious tone,

'Thou must die, wretch! thou hast but a moment to live; and that my generosity allows thee, to spend in a prayer to heaven, to pardon the outrage thou hast committed against me: for I would not have thee lose thy soul, as thou hast lost thy honour.' So saying, he unsheathed his poniard. His action and discourse terrified Estephania, who falling at his feet, and clasping her hands, said to him in the utmost astonishment, 'What is the matter, Señor! what cause of discontent have I been so unhappy as to give you? Why would you take away the life of your spouse? If you suspect her of infidelity, indeed you are mistaken.'

'No, no! (the jealous husband hastily replied) I am but too well assured of your falsehood: those who informed me are creditable persons. Don Huberto'——

'Ah, Señor! (said she, interrupting him with precipitation) you have reason to distrust Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine: if he has said anything to the prejudice of my virtue, do not believe him.'

'Peace, infamous woman! (answered Don Anastasio) by endeavouring to prejudice me against Hordales, you justify, instead of dissipating, my suspicions. You endeavour to render that relation suspected, because he is informed of your misconduct: you want to invalidate his testimony; but that artifice is in vain, and redoubles my desire of punishing your guilt.'

'My dear husband! (resumed the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly) distrust your own blind rage: if you follow its emotions, you will commit an action, which it will not be in your power to atone, when once you are convinced of your injustice. In the name of God quiet your transports: at least, give yourself time to clear up your suspicions, and do justice to a wife, who has no crime to reproach herself with.'

Any other than Anastasio would have been moved with these words, and still more with the affliction of her who pronounced them; but he, cruel man! far from being melted at her distress, once more bade the lady recommend herself quickly to God, and even lifted up his arm to strike. 'Hold, barbarian! (cried

she) if thy love for me is entirely extinguished; if the marks of tenderness which I have lavished upon thee are effaced from thy remembrance; if my tears cannot divert thee from thy execrable design; at least, have some regard to thy own blood. Arm not thy frantic hand against an innocent, who has not yet seen the light: thou canst not be its executioner, without offending heaven and earth. As for my part, I forgive thee my death: but be assured, the blood of the babe will cry for vengeance upon such a horrible deed.'

Howsoever determined Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to what Estephania might say, he could not help being moved by these dreadful images, which her last words presented to his thought. Wherefore, as if he had been afraid that his emotion would betray his resentment, he hastened to take advantage of the fury that remained in his heart, and plunged his poniard into the right side of his wife, quitted his house immediately, and fled from Antequera.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate lady was so stunned with the blow which she had received, that she lay some minutes on the floor, without any signs of life: afterwards, recovering her spirits, she uttered such plaints and lamentations, as brought an old maid-servant into the room. As soon as this good woman saw her mistress in such a piteous condition, she waked the rest of the domestics, and even the neighbours, with her cries. The chamber was soon filled with people; surgeons were called; they examined the wound, and had good hopes of her recovery. They were not mistaken in their conjecture; for, in a little time, they cured Estephania, who was happily delivered, three months after this cruel adventure, of a son (Señor Gil Blas), whom you now see. I am the fruit of that melancholy pregnancy.

Although scandal seldom spares a woman's virtue, it respected that of my mother; and this bloody scene was looked upon in town as the groundless transport of a jealous husband. My father, 'tis true, was known to be a violent man, very apt to take umbrage without

cause. Hordales concluded that his kinswoman suspected him of having disturbed the mind of Don Anastasia with false stories; and satisfied with being, at least, half revenged, left off visiting her. Not to tire you, sir, I will not enlarge upon the particulars of my education; but only observe, that my mother's principal care was to have me taught to fence; and I accordingly learned that exercise, a long time, in the most celebrated schools of Granada and Seville. She waited, with impatience, until I was old enough to measure my sword with that of Don Huberto, before she informed me of the cause she had to complain of him: then, I being in my eighteenth year, she imparted to me the whole story; not without shedding tears in abundance, and appearing affected with the most violent sorrow. What impression must a mother, in that condition, make on a son, who neither wanted courage nor sentiment? I went instantly, and challenged Hordales to a private place, where, after a pretty obstinate combat, I ran him through the body, in three places, and left him breathless on the spot.

Don Huberto, finding himself mortally wounded, fixed his last looks upon me, and said he received the death I had given him, as a just punishment for the crime he had committed against the honour of my mother. He confessed that he had resolved upon her destruction, to be revenged of her scorn; and expired, asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me. I did not think proper to return, in order to inform my mother of what had happened: I left that to fame; and passing the mountains, repaired to Málaga, where I embarked with the captain of a privateer, just ready to sail on a cruise. He thought I did not look like one who wanted courage, and gladly consented that I should join his volunteers.

We soon found an opportunity of signalizing ourselves. Near the island of Albouran, we met a corsair of Mellila, in her return to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish ship richly laden, which she had taken off Cartagena. We vigorously attacked the African,

and made ourselves masters of both ships, in which we found fourscore Christians, whom they were carrying as slaves to Barbary. Then taking advantage of a favourable wind that sprung up for the coast of Granada, we arrived, in a little time, at Punta de Helena.

While we asked the slaves, whom we had delivered, the places of their nativity, I put that question to a man of a good mien, who seemed to be about fifty years of age. He answered, with a sigh, that he was from Antequera. I felt a strange emotion at his reply, without knowing wherefore; and he perceiving it, was remarkably disturbed in his turn. 'I am (said I) your townsman: may I ask the name of your family?' 'Alas! (he replied) you renew my grief, by desiring me to gratify your curiosity. Eighteen years ago I quitted Antequera, where I cannot be remembered without horror: you yourself may, perhaps, have heard of me but too often: my name is Don Anastasio de Rada.' 'Just heaven! (cried I) can I believe my senses? What! is this Don Anastasio, my own father, whom I see!' 'What is that you say, young man? (cried he, in his turn, looking at me with surprise). Is it possible that you are that unhappy infant, which was in its mother's womb, when I sacrificed her to my fury?' 'Yes, father (said I), I am he, whom the virtuous Estephania brought into the world, three months after that fatal night on which you left her weltering in her blood.'

Don Anastasio, before I had finished these words, fell upon my neck, clasped me in his arms, and, for a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. After having yielded to those tender emotions, that such a meeting could not fail to raise, my father lifted up his eyes, and thanked heaven for having preserved the life of Estephania. But, a moment after, as if he had been afraid of giving thanks unseasonably, he asked in what manner the innocence of his wife had been proved? 'Señor (said I), nobody but you ever doubted it: her conduct

was always irreproachable. I will disabuse you: you must know that you were imposed upon by Don Huberto.' I then recounted the whole of that relation's perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and the confession he made at his death. My father was not so much pleased with the recovery of his freedom, as with the news I told. In the excess of his joy, he began to embrace me again with tenderness and transport; and could not help expressing his satisfaction with regard to my conduct. 'Come, my son (said he), let us hasten to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife, whom I have so unworthily treated. Since you have made me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart is torn with remorse!'

I was too eager to bring together persons who were so dear to me, to retard the happy moment: I quitted the privateer, and with my share of the prize we had taken, bought two mules at Adra, my father being unwilling to expose himself again to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough on the road, to relate his adventures, which I heard with as greedy attention as that which the Prince of Ithaca paid to those of the King his father[1]. In short, after having travelled several days, we gained the foot of a mountain, in the neighbourhood of Antequera, where we halted; and resolving to go home privately, did not enter the town till midnight.

I leave you to guess the surprise of my mother, at the return of a husband, whom she thought for ever lost; and the miraculous manner (if I may be allowed the expression) in which he was restored, became another cause for her astonishment. He asked pardon for his barbarity, with such genuine marks of repentance, that she could not help being affected with them; and instead of regarding him as an assassin, looked upon him as a man to whom heaven had subjected her will; so sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman!

[1] Fénelon's *Télémaque*, first published in 1699, had renewed its popularity in the enlarged posthumous edition issued by the Marquis de Fénelon in 1717.

Estephania had been so anxious on my account, that she was overjoyed at my return. But her pleasure was not without alloy: the sister of Hordales had begun a criminal process against the murderer of her brother, and caused me to be searched for everywhere, in such a manner, that my mother knowing how insecure I was at home, suffered great uneasiness, which obliged me to set out that very night for court, where I come, Señor, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since you design to speak to the Prime Minister in my behalf, and to support me with your whole credit.'

The valiant son of Don Anastasio here finished his narration; upon which I said to him, with an air of importance: 'Enough, Señor Don Roger, the case seems pardonable: I undertake to communicate your affair to his Excellency, and I will venture to promise you his protection.' The Granadine, upon this assurance, launched out into a world of thanks, which would only have entered at one ear and gone out at the other, had he not assured me that whatever service I should do him would be close followed by his acknowledgement. As soon as he touched on that string, I put myself in motion, and that very day recounted his story to the Duke, who having permitted me to introduce the cavalier, said to him, 'Don Roger, I am informed of the affair that brought you to court; Santillana has told me every circumstance; make yourself easy; you have done nothing that is not excusable; and it is particularly to those gentlemen, who revenge their injured honour, that his Majesty loves to show favour. For the sake of form, you must go to prison; but be assured, you shall not continue in it long. Your friend Santillana will take care of the rest and soon procure your enlargement.'

Don Roger made a profound bow to the Minister, on whose word he surrendered himself. His pardon, by my care, was expedited in a very little time; for, in less than ten days, I sent this new Telemachus home to his Ulysses and Penelope; whereas, had he been

without a protector, he would not, perhaps, have been quit for a whole year's imprisonment. I touched no more than a hundred pistoles for my good offices, so that it was not a great catch. But I was not yet a Calderon, to despise small matters.

## CHAPTER IX

*Gil Blas finds means to make a considerable fortune in a very short time, and gives himself great airs accordingly*

This affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense, had enriched himself by books of knight-errantry[1]. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats, he obtained, through my means, a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the Minister, properly speaking, had no business with this affair, his Excellency, at my request, was so good as to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two-thirds of the loading be-

[1] It is unlikely than any Madrid printer known to Gil Blas can have grown rich by selling books of knight-errantry. No book of this class appeared at Madrid during the forty-three years of Philip II's reign (1555-1598), and but one such book was reprinted in Spain after the publication of *Don Quixote* (1605-1615). Lesage, however, only shared the general impression—still prevalent—that books of chivalry remained in fashion much longer than they actually did.

longed to a merchant of Lisbon, who having reclaimed it in vain, came to court, in quest of a patron, who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles, for my protection.

Methinks I hear the reader cry in this place, 'Bravo, Señor de Santillana! Put hay into your boots; you are in a fine road, push your fortune.' O! that I will, I warrant you. I see, if I am not mistaken, my valet coming with a new prize, which he has grappled. Right: it is Scipio—let us hear him. 'Señor (said he), allow me to introduce this famous operator to you. He wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclusive of all others, during the space of ten years, in all the cities under the dominion of Spain; that is, all persons of his profession shall be prohibited from settling in the place or places where he resides; and he will pay, as an acknowledgement, two hundred pistoles to any person who will procure for him the said privilege.' I said to the mountebank, assuming the patron, 'Well, friend, your business shall be done.' Sure enough, in a very few days, I dispatched him with patents, which entitled him to the monopoly of cheating people through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had obtained of his Excellency the four favours I had asked, so easily, that I never hesitated in requesting a fifth; which was the government of the city of Vera, on the confines of Granada, for a knight of Calatrava, who promised me a thousand pistoles for the place. The Minister laughed to see me so hot on the game: 'Egad, Gil Blas (said he), you go on at a rare rate: you must be furiously inclined to oblige your neighbour. Hark ye, I shall not stand upon trifles with you: but when you demand governments, and other considerable favours, you shall, if you please, be contented with one half of the profit, and be accountable for the other to me. You can't imagine (added he) what expense I am obliged to be at, or how many resources I must have

to support the dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the disinterested appearance I assume, I confess I am not imprudent enough to disorder my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly.'

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those who wanted favours at court, should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera, for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another at the same price, for a knight of Santiago. I was not contented with making governors only, I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent. I was also willing that the clergy should feel my benevolence: I bestowed small benefices, canonships, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishopries and archbishopries, they were all in the gift of Don Rodrigo de Calderon, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders, and viceroys. A plain proof that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts, of which we made such an honourable traffic, were not always the best qualified, or most regular. We knew very well, that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we resembled those misers who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates has reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of the Prime Minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner; bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation, and now wanted to get rid of it, by the advice of his baker. I engaged

a coachman; and, as it is but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple honour of my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what put the finishing stroke to my pride, was the Minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgements that remained; and I became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro[1], who, when they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and wellnigh believed myself the Duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it into my head, that I should pass for such, or, perhaps, for one of his bastards: a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his Excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose, I ordered Scipio to look out for a skilful cook; and he found one, who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanus[2], of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines, and after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening, some of the principal clerks of the Minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side (for it was like master, like man), kept table also, in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintances at my expense. But, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides, I looked upon this profusion like a young man, and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason also for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grist to the mill; and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had, for once, driven a nail into the wheel of fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my

[1] Marcus Porcius Latro was a Spanish-Roman rhetorician. Ovid is said to have been one of his pupils.

[2] See Horace, *Satires*, I, 102.

vanity, but to make Fabricio an eyewitness of my pomp. I did not doubt that he was returned from Andalusia; and, that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing, that a Sicilian nobleman, of his acquaintance, expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nuñez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman, who had invited him to supper. 'Yes, friend (said I to him), this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides.' 'Is it possible (cried he, with great vivacity) that I find thee again in such opulence! how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galiano! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless (added he), followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy conduct; for it is by such prudent measures only that the stewards in great families become so rich.'

I let Fabricio applaud himself as much as he pleased, for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano: after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service: but perceiving that my poet, while I made the detail, sang his recantation within himself, I said to him, 'I forgive the Sicilian—between you and me, I have more cause to rejoice than be sorry, at his behaviour towards me. If the Count had not used me ill, I should have followed him to Sicily, where I should now be a servant, in expectation of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not be confidant to the Duke of Lerma.' Nuñez was so struck with these last words, that he continued some minutes incapable of uttering one syllable. Then, breaking silence, all of a sudden; 'Did I understand you aright? (said he). What! have you the confidence of the Prime Minister?' 'I share it (I replied) with Don Rodrigo de Calderon, and, in all

appearance, I shall make great progress.' 'Truly, Señor de Santillana (said he), I look upon you with admiration! you are capable of filling all sorts of employments. What talents you are master of! you have (to use the expression of our tennis-court) the universal tool: that is to say, you are qualified for everything. Finally, Señor (added he), I am overjoyed at your worship's prosperity.' 'Oh the devil! (said I, interrupting him). Mr. Nuñez, a truce with Señor and your worship: let us banish these terms, and live familiarly together.' 'Thou art in the right (he replied), I ought not to look upon thee otherwise than usual, although thou art become rich. I will confess my weakness: I was dazzled when I understood thy happy fate. But that prejudice is over, and I now behold thee again as my old friend Gil Blas.'

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. 'Gentlemen (said I to them, presenting Nuñez), you shall sup with Señor Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of King Numa[1], and writes in prose, like a prodigy.' Unluckily, I spoke to people who regarded poetry so little, that our author suffered on account of his profession. Scarce would they deign to favour him with a look. It was to no purpose that he said witty things, in order to attract their attention; they did not perceive the beauty of his sallies: and he was so much piqued at their want of taste, that he made use of his poetical licence, and cunningly withdrawing from the company, disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to table, without so much as asking what was become of him.

Just as I had done dressing, next morning, and was going abroad, the poet of Asturias entered my chamber, saying, 'I ask pardon (my friend) for having so abruptly left thy clerks last night; but truly, I was so much out of my element, among them, that I could

[1] The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests in their processions were composed by Numa. [This is a translation of a note by Lesage.]

no longer endure my situation. A parcel of insolent fellows with their self-sufficient starched airs! I can't comprehend how thou, who hast an acuteness of understanding, canst accommodate thyself to such stupid guests; this very day (added he) I will bring hither fellows of wit and spirit.' 'I shall be obliged to thee (answered I) and will entirely depend upon thy taste in the choice of them.' 'Thou art in the right (said he). I promise thee superior geniuses, of the most entertaining characters. I will go this instant to a coffee-house, where they meet, and bespeak them before they engage themselves elsewhere; for, happy is the man who can have their company at dinner or supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humour.'

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me, one after another, characterizing each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that those wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works (as he said) deserved to be engraven in letters of gold. I received those gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vainglorious. Though I had not laid my injunctions to Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee; my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a whit less arrogant. In the middle of supper, they worried me with verse and prose; each in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writings; one regaled me with a sonnet; another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read a criticism

upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavouring in his turn to give us an ode of Anacreon, translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation denied his assertion; and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives. The debate still continued; until, becoming quite furious, they got up and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lackeys, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which when we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public-house, without making the least apology for their impolite behaviour.

Nuñez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. 'Well, friend (said I to him), will you still extol your fellow-guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither a villainous set. I will henceforth keep to my clerks; don't talk to me of authors.' 'I will bring no more such (answered he), thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe.'

## CHAPTER X

*The morals of Gil Blas are entirely corrupted at court. He is charged with a commission by the Count de Lemos, and engages in an intrigue with that nobleman*

As soon as I was known to be in favour with the Duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning, my antechamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my *lever*. Two kinds of company came thither; one to buy my interest with the Minister for favours, and the other to move me by supplications, to obtain for them what they wanted, gratis. The first were

sure of being heard and assisted; but with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long, that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint. Of consequence, I cured myself of my friendships also, and stripped myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behaviour to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and after having expressed a great deal of friendship for me, as he always did when we met, desired me to ask of the Duke of Lerma a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me, that the cavalier in whose behalf he solicited, was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence: 'I don't at all doubt (added Joseph) that, kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honour in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity.' This was plainly telling me, that he expected it for nothing; and though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to do what he desired. 'I am charmed (answered I to Navarro) that I have it in my power to show my lively gratitude for all the favours which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for anyone is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon him, depend upon it; the affair is now no longer yours but mine.'

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured it for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgement I might have

expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said (with an air of mortification) when next we met: 'Ah! my dear Navarro, you were too late in speaking to me; I was prevented by Calderon, who has given away that same post; and I am quite in despair, that I have not better news to entertain you with.'

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever; but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For besides my being burthened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos for a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman, whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him the thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more, by order of the Duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his Excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day. He told me that he had at last gained his end, and entirely possessed the good graces of the Prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was: He then gave me charge of a very honourable commission which he had already prepared for me. 'Friend Santillana (said he), now is the time to be doing; spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who shall be worthy to amuse that gallant Prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me.' I promised to neglect nothing, in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people live by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of inquiry; but not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private: 'Child, I am going to entrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know, that in the midst of fortune's favours I find I want something?' 'I can

easily guess what that is (said he, interrupting me before I could proceed); you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and exhilarate your spirits; and truly it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave greybeards cannot dispense with such recreation.' 'I admire thy penetration (answered I with a smile); yes, a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I must warn thee beforehand, that I am very delicate in these matters. I expect a lady of beauty and good morals.' 'What you require (replied Scipio) is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair.'

Sure enough, in three days he said, 'I have discovered a treasure; a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honourable manner, on their fortune, which is but small; they are served by a chamber-maid of my acquaintance, who has assured me that, though their door is shut to everybody at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing to avoid scandal, by going in at night, without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier, who deserved to find the door unlatched; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place.' 'That's well (I replied); but I am afraid the chamber-maid imposes upon thee.' 'No, no (said he), I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interrogated the neighbours, and conclude from what they say, that Señora Catalina is a Danäe, on whom you may descend, like another Jupiter, in a shower of gold.' Prejudiced as I was against intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once; and as the chamber-maid came next day, and told Scipio, that if I pleased, I might be introduced that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither between eleven and twelve. The maid receiving me in

the dark, took me by the hand, and led me into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches. As soon as they perceived me, they got up, and saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took them for persons of quality. The aunt (whose name was Señora Mencia) though still agreeable, did not attract my attention, which was entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a goddess. To examine her minutely, however, she could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had such graces, together with a tempting luscious air, as hindered the eye from perceiving her defects.

Accordingly, I was disturbed at sight of her. I forgot that I came thither to perform the office of procurer; spoke in my own favour, and expressed myself like a man inspired by the most violent passion. The young lady, in whom I found three times more wit than she really had (so courteous did she seem), quite enchanted me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner: 'Señor de Santillana, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I have heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favour, by standing on ceremony; but don't imagine yourself the nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate.'

This well-aimed shot frightened away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed, made me recollect myself. I became again all of a sudden the faithful agent of the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, replied to Señora Mencia, 'Madam, I am pleased with your frankness, which I intend to

imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain.' 'Your refusal of my niece (replied the aunt coldly) was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of raillery.' 'I don't rally indeed, madam (cried I), nothing is more serious: I have orders to find out a lady who deserves to be honoured with the private visits of the Prince of Spain; I find such a one in your house, and mark it for the scene accordingly.'

Señora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner; 'If I was disposed to credit literally what you say, you must know that I am not of such a character, as to rejoice in the infamous honour of seeing my niece mistress to a Prince. My virtue disapproves——' 'What a saint you are with your virtue! (said I, interrupting her) you talk like one bred among silly citizens. Sure you joke, in pretending to consider things in a moral point of view; that would be stripping them of all their beauty; they must be surveyed with a carnal eye. Behold the heir-apparent of Spain, at the feet of the happy Catalina, adoring and loading her with presents: and remember, that from her perhaps will spring a hero, who will render his mother's name immortal as his own.'

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the Prince already in her chains, affected great indifference; so that I was obliged to invest the place anew, until at length, Señora Mencia seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the *chamade*[1], and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles: Imprimis, If the Prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina's charms, shall be inflamed, and determine to honour her with a noc-

[1] *Battit la chamade*=sounded a parley.

turnal visit, I shall take care to apprise the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose. Item, The Prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury-in-chief.

After this convention, the aunt and niece showed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behaviour, in consequence of which, I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the couriers of gallantry, and the women who want their service. Had people observed me leave this house, with such marks of favour, they might have said with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The Count de Lemos was overjoyed when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner, as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He told the ladies, he did not at all doubt that the Prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress which I had chosen for him, and that she on her part would have cause to be contented with such a lover; that the young Prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper: in short, he assured them, that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendance. This nobleman afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he set me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new-started adventure, and to desire he would send him a thousand pistoles to ensure its success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed; concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio,

but took to myself the honour of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. 'Mr. Gil Blas (said the Minister to me, with an air of raillery), I am ravished to find that, with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties; when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you.' 'My Lord (I replied in the same tone), I thank your Grace for intending me the preference; but give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous in serving your Excellency in that manner. Señor Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it.' The Duke smiled at my answer, then changing the discourse, asked if his nephew did not want money for this adventure. 'Pardon me (said I), he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles.' 'Very well (replied the Minister), carry them to him, bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the Prince shall propose.'

## CHAPTER XI

*The private visit and presents which the Prince of Spain made to Catalina*

I WENT that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the Count de Lemos, who told me, 'You could not come in better season. I have spoken to the Prince; he has bitten at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, in order to visit her. It is a thing determined, and our measures are taken accordingly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and give them that money which you have brought; for it is right to let them see that he is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive: besides, the bounty of Princes ought to precede their intrigues. As you will

accompany him, together with me (added he), be sure of being at his *coucher* this evening. Your coach also (for I think it is proper we should use it) must wait for us near the palace about midnight.'

I immediately repaired to the house, but did not see Catalina, who (they told me) was a-bed; so that I could only speak with Señora Mencia, to whom I said, 'Madam, pray excuse me for appearing in your house by day; but it is not in my power to do otherwise, for I must give you notice that the Prince of Spain will be here this night, and here (added I, putting the bag of money in her hand) is an offering which he sends to the temple of Cytherea, to render the divinities of the place propitious. You see I have not engaged you in a bad affair.' 'I am very much obliged to you (she replied), but tell me, Señor de Santillana, does the Prince love music?' 'He loves it (answered I) to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delicately touched.' 'So much the better! (cried she in a transport of joy). You give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration; she likewise dances perfectly well.' 'Heavens! (cried I in my turn) what perfections, my good aunt! so many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune; one of these talents is sufficient for the purpose.'

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the hour of the Prince's *coucher;* then giving orders to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me that the Prince, to get rid of his company the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of his being sick; but that he would rise again in an hour, and by a back-door, gain a private stair that led into the courtyard.

When he had informed me of what they had concerted together, he posted me in a place through which he assured me they would pass; and there I danced attendance so long, that I began to think our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire of

seeing Catalina, as if princes usually dropped these sort of whims before they have satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether, when two men accosted me, whom having discerned to be those I expected, I conducted them to my coach, in which they seated themselves, while I got upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house. I then handed the Prince and his companion out of the coach, and we walked towards the place for which we were bound. The gate opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though by way of distinction there was a small lamp fixed to the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall, where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay deshabille, so artfully disposed, that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our Prince would have been very well satisfied with Señora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to choose; but the charms of young Catalina, as they deserved, had the preference. 'Well, my Prince (said the Count de Lemos), was it possible for us to procure your Highness the pleasure of seeing two ladies more handsome than these?' 'I am ravished with them both! (replied the Prince) and I shall never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail.'

After this compliment, so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honourable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion, are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with an intention of adding fuel to the

fire ; I told the gallant, that his nymph sang and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sang in such an affecting manner, that the Prince dropped down at her feet, in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture, and only observe, that during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house, because of the day's approach. We the gentlemen undertakers carried him back to his apartment with dispatch, and then went to our different homes, as well satisfied in having fitted him with a she-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounted this adventure to the Duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular ; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, 'The Prince of Spain is so much engrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he proposes to visit her often, and attach himself to her alone. He wanted to send to her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. 'My dear Lemos (said he), you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well that I incommode, nay exhaust you, but my heart retains the obligation ; and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude, otherwise than in thought, for all your friendship, you shall not repent of having laid me under an obligation.' 'My Prince (said I, leaving him that instant), I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want.'

'It is not difficult to satisfy his demand (said the Duke to his nephew). Santillana, go fetch the money : or, if you please, he will purchase the jewels, for he is

a perfect connoisseur in stones, especially rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas?' (added he, looking at me with a satirical smile). 'Your Grace is very severe (I replied), I see that you want to make the Count merry at my expense.' This happened accordingly. The nephew asked what mystery there was in his words. 'Nothing (answered the Duke, laughing). only Santillana one day thought proper to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found that he had gained neither honour nor profit by the bargain.'

I should have thought myself easily quit. if the Minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging, and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His Excellency, after having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's house, where we chose jewels, which we showed to the Prince for his approbation; and which being afterwards entrusted to me, in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the Duke's money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies, when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of a handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of ear-rings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the Prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a mere hussy to our great monarch's son; but that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine masterpiece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.

## CHAPTER XII

*Catalina's real character. The perplexity and uneasiness of Gil Blas. The precaution he was obliged to take for his own quiet*

JUST as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and inquiring into the cause, was told, Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sang full throat, and frequently broke out in loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the seven wise men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to his company, 'Gentlemen, 'tis only my master come home; be not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I will go and speak two words to him, and rejoin you in a twinkling.' So saying, he came to my apartment. 'What a hubbub is this? (said I) what sort of people are those you entertain below? are they poets?' 'No, indeed, sir, if you please (he replied), it were pity to bestow your wine on such company. I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very rich young fellow, who wants for his money an employment by your interest; and for him alone I give this entertainment: at every draught he drinks, I raise the gratification you are to receive, ten pistoles, and will make him drink till day.' 'If that be the case (I replied), go back to thy friends, and don't spare the wine in my cellar.'

I did not think this a proper season to talk with him about Catalina; but next morning when I got up, I spoke to him in this manner: 'Friend Scipio, thou knowest how we live together; I treat thee more like a comrade than a domestic; and in consequence thou wilt be to blame in deceiving me as a master. Let us, then, lay aside all reserve with one another. I will tell thee something that will surprise thee, and thou shalt disclose to me thy real sentiments of those two women with whom thou hast made me acquainted.

Between thee and me, I suspect them to be two artful pusses, cunning in proportion to the simplicity which they affect. If my opinion does them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be well pleased with me; for I confess it was for him that I wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried him to Catalina's house, and he is become passionately fond of her.' 'Señor (answered Scipio), I am too well used by you, to be wanting in sincerity with my master. I had yesterday a private conversation with the maid of these two Princesses, and she related their history, which to me seemed very diverting. You shall hear it in two words.

'Catalina is daughter to a poor gentleman of Aragon, and finding herself at the age of fifteen an orphan, as handsome as poor, listened to an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having served as a parent rather than a husband to her. She secured his fortune, consisting of some movables and three hundred pistoles in ready money, then joined herself to Señora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though already in the wane. These two good friends lived together, and began to behave so as to attract the notice of justice; at which the ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned Toledo through vexation, and settled in Madrid, where they have lived about two years, without visiting any person in the neighbourhood. But the best circumstance of the story is this, they have hired two small houses, separated only by a wall, having in the cellar a stair of communication from the one to the other. Señora Mencia lives with a young maid-servant in one of these houses, and the commander's widow possesses the other, with an old duenna who passes for her grandmother; so that our Aragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a pupil under the wings of her grandame. When she acts the niece, she is called Catalina, and when she plays the grandchild her name is Sirena.'

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and inter-

rupting Scipio, said, 'What do I hear? Alas! I am afraid that this cursed Aragonian is no other than the mistress of Calderon.' 'Truly (he replied), it is the same! I thought this piece of news would have given you pleasure.' 'Thou art very much mistaken (answered I), I have more cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it; dost thou not see the consequences?' 'No, in faith (resumed Scipio), what mischief can it produce? You are not sure that Don Rodrigo will discover what passes; and if you are afraid of his getting information, you have nothing to do but prepossess the Minister in your favour, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if after this Calderon should attempt to do you an ill office with his Excellency, he will perceive that his sole design is to injure you out of a spirit of revenge.'

Scipio by this discourse banished my fear; and resolved to follow his advice, I informed the Duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the Prince. But the Minister, far from pitying his favourite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on in my old way, saying that after all it was glorious for Calderon to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of Spain, and to be as well received by her as his Highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his Grace.

Imagining that by this precaution I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous shelves that environed it, my fear vanished. I still accompanied the Prince to the house of Catalina, *alias* the fair Sirena, who was artful enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Gil Blas continues to act the man of consequence. Hears news of his family, which makes but small impression upon him, and quarrels with Fabricio*

I HAVE already observed, that in the morning my antechamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals, but I would not receive them *viva voce;* and, according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to each solicitor, 'Give in a memorial.' I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who came to put me in mind of a year's rent being due. As for my butcher and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memorials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don't intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of the grandees, as if I had been a man in their sphere. If (for example) I had occasion to mention the Duke of Alva, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them without ceremony, 'Alva' and 'Medina Sidonia.' In a word, I became so vain and haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas, poor duenna and usher! I did not so much as inquire whether you were happy or miserable in Asturias! I did not even think of you! The court is like the river Lethe, in making us forget our parents and friends when they are under misfortunes.

I no longer, therefore, remembered my family, when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a plebeian, I asked what he wanted with me. 'How! Señor Gil Blas (said he), don't

you remember me?' In vain did I consider him attentively: I was obliged to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. 'I am (he replied) one of your old schoolfellows, a native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer, your uncle, the canon's neighbour. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at *gallina ciega*[1].'

'I have (said I) but a confused idea of the amusements of my infancy: the business in which I have been engaged, since that time, has effaced them from my memory.' 'I am come (he resumed) to Madrid, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent; and I heard it said that you were on a good footing at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on your good fortune; and will, at my return into the country, overwhelm your family with joy, by telling them such an agreeable piece of news.'

I could not, in common decency, forbear asking in what situation he had left my father, mother, and uncle: but this piece of duty I performed so coldly, that the grocer had no great reason to admire the force of blood. He seemed shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and being a plain, vulgar young fellow, said bluntly, 'I thought you had more tenderness and sensibility for your relations. How coldly do you inquire into their circumstances! Know, that your father and mother are still at service; and the good Canon Gil Perez, burthened with old age and infirmities, draws near his end. People ought to have some natural affection; and since you are in a condition to assist your parents, I advise you, as a friend, to send two hundred pistoles yearly for their support: by which means you will make their life easy and happy, without any inconvenience to yourself.' Instead of being moved by the picture he drew of my family, I was disgusted at the liberty which he took in advising me, without being desired so to do. With a little more address, perhaps, he might have persuaded me; but his freedom had a

[1] *Gallina ciega*=blindman's buff.

contrary effect. He perceived my displeasure, by my silence; and continuing his exhortation with more malice than charity, made me lose my patience entirely. 'Oh, this is too much! (cried I in a passion) go, Master Muscada, and meddle with your own concerns: it becomes you well, indeed, to prescribe to me: I know my duty, on this occasion, better than you can teach me.' So saying, I pushed the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, however, did not fail of having some effect: I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and was melted accordingly. I recalled the care they had of my infancy and education: I considered the duty I owed to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some transports of acknowledgement, which, however, came to nothing: they were soon stifled by my ingratitude, and succeeded by profound oblivion. There are many parents who have children of the same stamp.

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed, entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and thoughtful; in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricio, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying, 'Truly, Gil Blas, thou art grown out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present, thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and freedom of behaviour, which are the soul of friendship: on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealest from me thy secret views: nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew.'

'You joke, sure (said I, with an air of indifference), I can't perceive any change in myself.' 'Thy own

eyes are no judges (answered he), they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend. Do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to knock at thy door in the morning, thou camest in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now behold the difference! Thou art attended by half a score of lackeys. I am obliged to wait in thy antechamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received? with a forced politeness, and air of importance: so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee on the footing of a comrade? No, Santillana, no! I can't put up with it. Farewell. Let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who censures thy behaviour, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself.'

I felt myself more irritated than reclaimed by his reproaches, and let him go, without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion at that time, the friendship of a poet was not of such value, as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it: I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the King, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a similitude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I know not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the King, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectful personages. O fortune! how are thy favours usually dispensed! The Stoic Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion, who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK

# BOOK IX

## CHAPTER I

*Scipio advises Gil Blas to marry, proposes the daughter of a rich and noted goldsmith for his wife : the steps which were taken in consequence of this advice*

One evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day. 'A masterpiece (he replied). I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance.' 'The daughter of a goldsmith ! (cried I, with an air of disdain). Hast thou lost thy senses ? How canst thou propose a wife from the city ? One who has certainly merit, and is on a sure footing at court, ought to entertain more elevated views, methinks.' 'How, sir ! (replied Scipio) sure you are not in earnest : consider that the male alone ennobles[1]; and be not more delicate than a thousand noblemen, whose names I can mention. Do you know that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats ? Is not this a fine morsel of plate ?' When I heard him talk of such a round sum, I became more tractable. 'I yield (said I to my secretary), the dowry determines me : When shall I touch it ?' 'Softly, sir (he replied), a little patience : I must first communicate the proposal to the father, and obtain his consent.' 'Good ! (said I, laughing heartily). Are you still thereabouts ? I find the marriage is far advanced.' 'Further than you

[1] This is not strictly true of Spain ; a Spanish commoner who marries a Spanish woman of rank assumes the corresponding title.

imagine (answered he), I want only an hour's conversation with the goldsmith; and will answer for his consent. But before we proceed, let us come to a composition, if you please. Suppose I procure for you those hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?' 'Twenty thousand' (I replied). 'Heaven be praised (said he), I limit the acknowledgment to ten thousand: for once, you are more generous than I. To-morrow I will set this negotiation on foot; and you may depend upon its success: otherwise, I am but an ass.' In effect, two days after, he said, 'I have spoken to Señor Gabriel Salero, the goldsmith; and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you for a son-in-law: and you shall have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear, that you are in favour with the Minister.' 'If that be the case (answered I to Scipio), I shall be married very soon: but à propos, Hast thou seen the girl? Is she handsome?' 'Not so handsome as the dowry (said he): between you and me, this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature: but, luckily, that you don't mind.' 'No, faith, my child! (said I) we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying; and look for beauty nowhere but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to centre in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect.'

'This is not all (resumed Scipio). Señor Gabriel invites you to supper to-night; and we have agreed that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only as a simple guest: and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this, you may see that he wants to study your temper, before he proceeds: so that you must be upon your guard before him.' 'Zooks! (said I, with an air of confidence) let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I shall lose nothing by his scrutiny.'

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another several times. He was an honest citizen, polite *hasta porfiar*[1], as the saying is. He introduced me to Señora Eugenia, his wife, and young Gabriela, his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments, without infringing the treaty. I said a great many nothings, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowry, I know not. What a fine house did Señor Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru: that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honour to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night, I treated our goldsmith in my turn; and as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mean mortal in comparison to these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a middling fortune; twenty

[1] *Hasta porfiar* = to the point of obstinacy.

thousand ducats a year, or so. Upon which, these greedy hunters of honour and riches cried, I was in the wrong ; and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the Prime Minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and ask if he was pleased with my behaviour: 'I am charmed with it! (replied the citizen) the young man has won my heart. But, Señor Scipio (added he), I conjure you, by our old acquaintance, to speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know: tell me that of Señor de Santillana: Is he a gamester? Is he a rake? What is his vicious inclination? Pray don't conceal it.' 'You affront me, Señor Gabriel, by asking such a question (replied the mediator), I am not so much in my master's interests as in yours. If he had any bad quality capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law? No faith! I am too much your humble servant. But between you and me, I know no other fault in him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man.' 'So much the better (cried the goldsmith), I am glad of it. Go, friend, assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I would bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the Minister.'

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation than I hastened to Salero's house, to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand by their behaviour towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His Excellency received him very courteously, and assured him, that he was very glad he had chosen for his son-in-law a man for whom

he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed, that the tear stood in his eye: he clasped me in his arms at parting, and said, 'My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married in eight days at furthest.'

## CHAPTER II

*Gil Blas, by accident, remembers Don Alphonso de Leyva, and does him a piece of service, out of vanity*

The order of my history requires that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the service which I did to Don Alphonso my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now, that I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant; and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I reflected, that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honour. Addressing myself, therefore, to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Caesar de Leyva and his son; and that having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the Government of Valencia for either the one or other. The Minister answered, 'With all my heart, Gil Blas: I love to see thee grateful and generous. Besides, I esteem the family thou speakest of; the Leyvas have been always good servants to the King, and well deserve that place. Thou mayst dispose of it at thy own pleasure: I give it thee for a nuptial present.'

Ravished with my success, I went without loss of

time, and desired Calderon to make out letters patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending in respectful silence until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened, and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderon heard in their turns. His different behaviour to different people was very remarkable: he received some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honoured with a bow, and conducted them to his closet-door. He put (to use the expression) different shades of consideration in the civilities he showed. On one hand, I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship, that surprised me not a little. 'Ah! my dear colleague (cried he), what affair procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? is there anything in which I can serve you?' I told him the cause of my visit; and he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done, by the same hour next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of his antechamber, whither he never used to go, except with grandees, and there embraced me anew.

What is the meaning of all this civility? (said I to myself, going out) what can it forbode? Sure Calderon meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous

of gaining my friendship; or, feeling his favour on the decline, cultivates me, with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf. I did not know which of these conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True indeed, he bated a great deal of that politeness, in his reception of other people, who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and disobliging to everybody. But all of them were sufficiently revenged, by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man, in a very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderon, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did not even look at the cavalier, said to him, in a surly tone, 'What is your name, friend?' 'I was called Francillo in my infancy (replied the cavalier, very coolly), since that time, I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zúñiga, and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedrosa.' Calderon, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavoured to excuse himself. 'Señor (said he to the Count), I beg pardon, if not knowing you——' 'I want none of thy excuses (said Francillo, with disdain), I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a Minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayst, if thou wilt, be vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet.'

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke[1],

[1] *Je marquai cette chasse-là*=I scored that chase. The expression is borrowed from the vocabulary of tennis (Rule 17). When the server makes no attempt to return

and resolved to take care how I behaved to people, in giving audience, and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it, by an express, to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which, his Excellency informed him, that the King had named him to the government of Valencia. I took no notice of the share I had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing myself with the hope of telling him, by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court, to take the oaths for his employment.

## CHAPTER III

*The preparations for the marriage of Gil Blas, and the great event that rendered them useless*

Let us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony: Salero took off rich clothes for the bride; and I hired a chambermaid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of a hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I showed great respect to the goldsmith and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and cit-like[1] observations, I patiently listened.

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a stroke, the marker calls a chase at the spot where the ball drops; the players change sides to play for the chase, which is won if the ball goes into the dedans, or drops nearer the end wall than did the ball which made the chase.

[1] 'Cit,' an opprobrious abbreviation of 'citizen,' is defined by Samuel Johnson as 'a pert low townsman; a pragmatical tradesman.'

Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed into a great hall, where we were regaled with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which was not ill executed, although they had not chosen the best hands of Madrid. Several gay airs, with which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us all in such good humour, that we began to form country dances. God knows how we performed, since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore; though I had no other principles of that art, than two or three lessons, which I received from a coxcomb of a dancing-master, who came to teach the pages, when I lived with the Marchioness de Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted ourselves, it being time for each to think of retiring, I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. 'Adieu, my son (said Salero, embracing me), I will wait on you to-morrow morning, with the dowry, in good gold.' 'My dear father (I replied), you shall be very welcome.' Then wishing the family good night, I got into the coach that waited for me at the gate, and drove homewards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Señor Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some a-horseback, others a-foot, armed with swords and carbines, surrounded the coach, and stopped it, crying, 'In the King's name.' They made me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-chaise, where the chief of these cavaliers mounting along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia. I soon guessed that my fellow-traveller was an honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen; that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me anything of the matter. I observed that perhaps he might be mistaken in his man. 'No, no (said he), I know my business better. You are Señor de Santillana; and I have orders to conduct you to the place for which we

are bound.' Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night, along the Manzanares, in profound silence; changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia, where I was locked up in the tower.

## CHAPTER IV

*The treatment of Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and the manner in which he learned the cause of his imprisonment*

They began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploring my condition, for, as yet, I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance, to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderon; nevertheless, even supposing that he had discovered everything I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Sometimes I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his Excellency; and sometimes I thought that he himself was the cause of my misfortune, for some political reasons that often induce Ministers to use their favourites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated by these different conjectures, when the light of day, penetrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two courses of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned myself to my sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, gaoler as he was, felt an emotion of pity. 'Señor prisoner (said he), don't despair. You must not be so sensible

of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Meanwhile, eat the King's allowance with a good grace.'

My comforter went out, when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer, but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honour to my provision, which, to me, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the King's bounty, as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than assuage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the meantime, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in his hand, approached me, saying, 'Señor Gil Blas, behold one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrés de Tordesillas, who lived with you at Granada, and was gentleman to the Archbishop, while you were in favour with that prelate[1]. You desired him, if you remember, to employ his credit in my behalf; and by his interest, I was named for an employment in Mexico: but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the city of Alicante, where I married the daughter of him who commanded the castle, and, by a train of adventures which I shall recount to you by and by, I am now become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders to keep you from the speech of every living soul, to make you lie upon straw, and live upon bread and water only. But I have too much humanity, not to pity your misfortunes: besides, you have done me service; and my gratitude prevails over the orders which I have received. Far from being the instrument of that cruelty which they would exercise upon you, I intend to soften the rigour of your fate. Get up and follow me.'

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my thanks, my understanding was so much disturbed, that I could not answer one word. I did not fail, however, to follow him, through a court, and up a narrow stair, to a small

[1] See Book VII, Chapter iii, Vol. ii, p. 18.

room, quite a-top of the tower. I was not a little surprised when I entered this chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. 'The victuals will be presently brought (said Tordesillas), and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see, from your window, the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of your grief shall be mellowed, by time, into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in letting your eyes rove over such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be assured of being well provided in linen, and other necessaries befitting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, and comfortable diet, and I will furnish you with as many books as you choose to read. In a word, you shall be as well treated as a prisoner can be.'

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging offers, I took courage, gave my jailor a thousand thanks, told him that he recalled me to life, by his generous behaviour, and that I wished I might once again have an opportunity of showing my gratitude. 'And why not have an opportunity? (he replied) do you think you have lost your liberty for ever? You are mistaken; and I dare assure you, that you will be quit for a few months of imprisonment.' 'What say you, Señor Don Andrés! (cried I) it seems, then, you know the cause of my misfortune.' 'I confess (said he) I am not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil, who brought you hither, imparted the secret to me; and I shall now reveal it.'

'He told me that the King, being informed of your having, in concert with the Count de Lemos, carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady; had, to punish you both, exiled the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the

rigour which you have experienced since your arrival.' 'And how (said I), did this affair come to the knowledge of the King? It is that circumstance in particular, of which I want to be informed.' 'And that circumstance (he replied) is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who, in all likelihood, is himself ignorant of the matter.'

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron, an *olla podrida*[1] in another; and the third contained a turkey-poult on a marmalade of *berengena*[2]. When Tordesillas saw that we had everything we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse, and having locked the door, we sat down at table, opposite to one another. 'Let us begin (said he) with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite after a fast of two days.' So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half-starved; and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I baulked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel images which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper, in vain, exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellence of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I should have drank it without pleasure, at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such

[1] The word *podrida* is now generally omitted in speaking of this national dish, but the phrase *olla podrida* has classic authority in its favour: see the *Epístola á la Princesa de Molfeta* in Joaquin Hazañas y la Rúa's edition of Gutierre de Cetina's *Obras* (Seville, 1895), ii, 80.

[2] *Berengena* = egg-plant.

absent-mindedness, that when it was ended I could not have repeated one word of what he said. He concluded, that he undertook too much, in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying: 'Señor de Santillana, I will leave you to your repose, or rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But, I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the King is naturally good: when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished.' So saying, Mr. Keeper went downstairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off everything, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.

## CHAPTER V

*His reflections before he went to sleep, and an account of the noise that waked him*

I SPENT two hours at least, in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. 'I am confined here, then (said I to myself), for having contributed to the pleasures of the heir-apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that kind to so young a prince: for, his tender years alone make me guilty. Had he been of a more advanced age, the King would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the Prince, or that of the Duke of Lerma, who will, doubtless, revenge his nephew the Count de Lemos. How, then, has the King discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.'

Hither my doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects

had been abandoned. 'My strong box! (cried I), my dear riches, what is become of you? into whose hands are you fallen? Alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were amassed!' I painted to myself the disorder that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favourable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this, the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapours of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep, and, probably, the day would have surprised me in this condition, had I not been waked, all of a sudden, by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and hearing no more, believed it was a dream: but, in a moment, my ear was struck again with the sound of the instrument, and the same voice, that sung the following verses:

Ay de mi! un año felice
Parece un soplo ligero;
Pero sin dicha un instante
Es un siglo de tormento[1].

My sorrow was increased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. 'I have but too well experienced the truth of these words (said I), methinks the season of my prosperity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison.' I relapsed into a terrible reverie, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the talk. My lamentations, however,

[1] Alas! a year complete of bliss
Fleets like a zephyr vain;
But one unhappy moment is
A century of pain.

The author of the Spanish verses has not been identified.

ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room, by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said: the Erema, which I imagined was, at least, equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettle and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing to my view, but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably, I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already half dressed, when Tordesillas came in, followed by an old woman-servant, who brought shirts and towels for my use. 'Señor Gil Blas (said he), here is linen: don't be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well (added he), how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?' 'I should have slept, perhaps, till now (answered I), had I not been awakened by a voice, accompanied by a guitar.' 'The cavalier, who has disturbed your repose (said he), is a State prisoner, whose chamber is next to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one another. You will find a mutual consolation in each other's acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both.'

I assured Don Andrés that I was extremely sensible of his kindness, in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day; and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprised me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make

such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold the most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by showing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add to this, that Nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endued Cogollos with a great deal of understanding and valour; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sang in the night, for fear of incommoding me, notwithstanding my entreaties, that he would not constrain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance, and became stronger and stronger every-day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since, by our discourse, we aided one another, reciprocally, to bear our misfortune with patience.

One afternoon, entering his room, just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he, placing himself on his bed's feet, played a very moving air, and sang words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him, with a smile, 'Señor Knight, these are words which you were never obliged to employ in your amours: you are too well qualified to find the women cruel.' 'You have too good an opinion of me (he replied); I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften a heart which I believed harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who treated me with extreme rigour. I must entertain you with that story, by which you will also learn the cause of my misfortune.'

## CHAPTER VI

*The history of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Dona Helena de Galisteo*

Not much less than four years ago, I set out from Madrid for Cora, to visit Doña Eleonora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I am. I was no sooner arrived at her house, than love began to invade my repose. The windows of my apartment faced the lattices of a lady, who lived opposite to my aunt's house; and I could easily perceive her, by the assistance of the width of her grates, and the narrowness of the street. I did not neglect the opportunity; and found my neighbour so handsome, that I was enchanted at once. I expressed my passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she could not be mistaken. She perceived it accordingly; but was not at all disposed to pride herself on her observation, and still less to answer my coquetries.

I made inquiries about this dangerous person, who captivated hearts so suddenly; and learned, that her name was Doña Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, who possessed a rich manor a few leagues from Coria; that many matches had been in her offer; but her father rejected them all. because he was resolved to give her in marriage to his nephew Don Augustine de Olighera, who, in the meantime, had the privilege of seeing and conversing with his cousin everyday. I was not discouraged by this piece of information: on the contrary, it inflamed my passion; and the proud pleasure of supplanting a beloved rival, excited me, perhaps, even more than my love, to pursue my point. I continued then to address Helena with the most passionate looks: I supplicated her maid Felicia in the same language, in order to implore her assistance. I even talked on my fingers. But these gallantries were of no use. I made as little impression on the maid as on her mistress: they seemed equally cruel and inaccessible.

Since they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters; and set people at work to discover what acquaintances Felicia had in town. They got notice, that an old gentlewoman, called Teodora, was her best friend, and that they often visited one another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I went to Teodora in person, and by presents engaged her in my interests. She espoused my cause, promised to procure for me a private conversation with her friend, at her house, and kept her promise the very next day. 'I am no longer unhappy (said I to Felicia), since my misfortunes have excited your compassion. How much am I indebted to your friend for having prevailed upon you to grant me the satisfaction of an interview!' 'Señor (answered she), Teodora can do anything with me; she has engaged me in your behalf; and if it be in my power to make you happy, you shall soon enjoy your wish; but, with all my goodwill, I don't know that I can give you much assistance: for, not to flatter you, you have never formed a more difficult enterprise. You are in love with a lady, who is prepossessed in favour of another cavalier: and what sort of a lady! one so full of pride and dissimulation, that if, by dint of perseverance and assiduity, you should succeed so far as to cost her some sighs, don't imagine that her pride will give you the pleasure of hearing them.' 'Ah! my dear Felicia! (cried I, in a transport of grief) why do you describe the obstacles which I have to surmount? I am assassinated by your information! deceive me rather than drive me to despair!' So saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it in mine, put upon her finger a diamond worth three hundred pistoles, accompanied by such moving expressions as brought the tears into her eyes.

She was too much affected by my discourse, and too well satisfied with my behaviour, to leave me altogether without consolation. She began to smooth the difficulties a little, saying, 'Señor, what I have represented, ought not to deprive you of hope. Your

rival, 'tis true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come and visit his cousin, and talk to her whenever he pleases; and this is a circumstance favourable for you. Their being accustomed to see one another every-day, renders their conversation a little languid: they seem to part without pain, and meet again without pleasure: one would think they were already married. In a word, I don't perceive that my mistress has a violent passion for Don Augustine: besides, as to personal qualifications, there is a difference between you and him, that must turn to your account, in the eyes of such a delicate young lady as Doña Helena. Be not discouraged, therefore: continue your gallantry, which I will second; and I will not let slip one opportunity of making everything you do to please her, tend to your advantage with my mistress. In vain shall she attempt to disguise her sentiments. I will soon discover them, in spite of her dissimulation.'

After this conversation, Felicia and I parted, very well satisfied with one another. I prepared anew to ogle Don George's daughter, whom I treated with a serenade, in which the verses you have heard were sung by a fine voice, which I had provided for the purpose. After the concert, the maid, in order to sound her mistress, asked how she had been entertained? 'The voice (said Doña Helena) gave me pleasure.' 'And were not the words which were sung very moving?' (replied the maid). 'I paid no attention to them (said the lady), I listened to the tune only. I took no notice of the verses, neither do I desire to know who gave the serenade.' 'If that be the case (cried the waiting-woman), poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his reckoning, and not very wise in spending his time in looking at our lattices.' 'Perhaps it may not be he (said the mistress, coldly), but some other cavalier, who has declared his passion for me, by this concert.' 'Pardon me, madam (replied Felicia), it is no other but Don Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me this morning, in the street, and begged me to tell you, that he adores you, in spite of the rigour

with which you repay his love; and that, in short, he should think himself the happiest of mankind, if you would allow him to manifest his passion in the usual course of gallantry. This discourse (added she) sufficiently proves that I am not mistaken.'

Don George's daughter changed countenance, all of a sudden, and darting a severe look at her maid, 'You might have dispensed (said she) with repeating that impertinent conversation to me. Let me have no such reports for the future, if you please; and if that rash youth shall have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to make his addresses to one who will regard his gallantry more than I do, and to choose a more honourable pastime, than that of being all day long at his windows, to observe what I do in my apartment.'

All this was faithfully reported to me, in a second interview with Felicia, who, pretending that I must not take the words of her mistress in a literal sense, would have persuaded me that the affair went on swimmingly. But I, who was ignorant of finesse, and did not believe that the text could be explained in my favour, distrusted the commentary she made. She laughed at my diffidence, called for paper and ink, and said: 'Señor Knight, write immediately to Doña Helena, in the style of a desponding lover. Paint your sufferings in the most passionate colours, and in particular, complain of her prohibiting you to appear at your windows. Promise to obey her, but, at the same time, assure her, that it will cost you your life. Put this into such expressions as you gentlemen are so well skilled in, and leave the rest to me. I hope the event will do more honour to my penetration than you imagine.'

Had I neglected this, I should have been the first lover who did not take the advantage of such an opportunity to write to his mistress. I composed a most pathetic letter, and before I sealed it, showed it to Felicia, who having read it, said, with a smile, that if women have the art of captivating the men, these

last, in return, knew very well how to cajole the women. The waiting-maid took my letter, then laying strong injunctions on me to keep my windows shut for a few days, returned to the house of Don George.

'Madam (said she to Doña Helena, when she went home), I met Don Gaston, who did not fail to make up to me, and endeavoured to sooth me with flattering expressions. He asked, with a faltering voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had delivered his message to you. Then I, faithful and ready to execute your orders, cut him short with a vengeance; inveighed against him, loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street, confounded at my petulance.' 'I am overjoyed (replied Doña Helena) that you have rid me of that importunate young fellow: but there was no occasion to speak rudely to him. A young woman ought always to be gentle in her behaviour.' 'Madam (said the maid), a passionate lover is not to be banished by words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay, this is seldom accomplished by indignation and rage. Don Gaston, for example, was not repulsed. After having loaded him with reproaches (as I have said), I went to the house of your relation, whither you sent me; and that lady unfortunately detained me too long: I say too long because, on my return, I found my man again, whom, I assure you, I did not expect to see. I was so much disturbed at sight of him, that my tongue, which never failed me before, could not furnish me with one syllable. In the meantime, what does he? he slipped a paper into my hand, which I kept, without knowing what I did, and then disappeared in an instant.'

So saying, she pulled my letter out of her bosom, and gave it, by way of joke, to her mistress, who taking it as for diversion, read it over, and then affected reserve. 'Truly, Felicia (said she, with a serious air), you are a fool and a mad creature, to receive this billet. What will Don Gaston think of it? and what must I believe? Your conduct gives

me cause to distrust your fidelity; and may make him suspect that I am pleased with his passion. Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this instant, that I peruse, with pleasure, the characters which he has written. You see to what shame you have exposed my pride.' 'O! not at all, madam (replied the maid), he can entertain no such thoughts: and, suppose he did, he shall not preserve them long. I will tell him, when next I see him, that I have shown his letter to you; that you looked at it with indifference; and, in short, without reading it, tore it with the most mortifying contempt.' 'You may safely swear that I have not read it (said Doña Helena). I should be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single words of it.' Don George's daughter was not contented with talking in this manner; she tore my billet, and forbid her woman to talk to me for the future.

As I promised to play the gallant no more at my windows, since the sight of me gave offence, I kept them shut several days, to render my obedience more affecting; but to supply those looks of which I was abridged, I prepared new serenades for my cruel Helen. One night I repaired under her balcony with musicians, and the guitars were already struck up, when a cavalier came sword in hand, and disturbed the concert, laying about him at a furious rate among the performers, who immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage that animated that bold intruder, awaked mine: I advanced to punish him, and an obstinate combat began. Doña Helena and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries: these, as well as several people in the neighbourhood, came running to part the combatants, but they arrived too late, and found nobody on the field of battle but a cavalier almost without life, weltering in his own blood; and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Everybody

pitied my fate, and Doña Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature, who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning with her maid, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustine de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions, without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favoured my flame, had committed this action, to show that he was not quite so passive as she believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon forgotten, by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life, but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Doña Eleonora went to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me in marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustine as a man whom perhaps he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies to be a new-comer in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love, and obtained of Señor Don George the permission to speak to his daughter in the

presence of her maid. What a delightful conversation this was! I entreated, I pressed the lady in such a manner, to tell me if her father, in yielding to her my tenderness, had done any violence to her inclination, that she owned I was not beholden to her obedience alone. After this charming confession, my whole study was to please her, and contrive entertainments, until the day of our nuptials, which were to be celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighbourhood intended to appear.

I gave a grand entertainment to Don George and his daughter, with all their relations and friends, at a superb country-house which my aunt had without the town, on the side of Manroi. Here a concert of vocal and instrumental music was prepared by my order, together with a company of strollers to represent a comedy. In the middle of the feast, one came and whispered to me, that there was a man in the hall, who wanted to speak with me. I got up from table to see who it was, and found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and who presented to me a letter which I opened, and read these words:

'If you have a regard for your honour, as every knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to be to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi, where you will find a cavalier ready to give satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and to put you, if he can, out of condition to espouse Doña Helena.

'Don Augustine de Olighera.'

If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don Augustine kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the

feast, and said to the man who brought the letter: 'Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning, before sunrise, at the appointed place.'

Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared during the rest of the day as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town, in the same manner as he had come out. As for my part, I stayed in the country-house, on pretence of taking the air next morning; but the true reason was, that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I waited with impatience for day, which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone, as if I intended to take a ride in the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered in the plain a man on horseback, coming towards me at full speed; upon which I put spurs to my horse, to save him one-half of the way. We soon met, and I found it was my rival. 'Knight (said he in an insolent tone), it is with regret that I come to blows with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have renounced Don George's daughter with a good grace; or at least take it for granted, that you would not be so easily quit, if you persisted in your addresses to her.' 'You are too proud (answered I) of an advantage which perhaps you owed more to the darkness of the night than to your superior skill. You don't consider that the success of these rencounters depends often on accident.' 'It is never accidental with me (said he with an arrogant air), and I will now show you, that by day as well as night, I know how to punish those audacious knights who interfere with me.'

I made no reply to this haughty speech, but alighted

instantly. Don Augustine did the same: we tied our horses to a tree, and began to fight with equal vigour. I will frankly own, that I had to do with an enemy who handled a rapier better than I, though I had been two years at school. He was a complete fencer; I could not possibly have exposed my life to greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens, that the strongest is vanquished by the weakest, my rival, in spite of all his skill, received a thrust that went through his heart, and fell stone dead in an instant.

I returned immediately to the country-house, where I informed a valet de chambre, whom I could trust, of what had happened, and said to him, 'Dear Ramiro, before justice can take cognizance of this event, take a good horse, and give my aunt notice of the adventure. Ask of her some money and jewels, and bring them to me at Plasencia, where thou wilt find me in the first inn you come to as you enter the city.'

Ramiro acquitted himself of his commission with such diligence, that he arrived at Plasencia three hours after me. He told me, that Doña Eleonora was more pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel that revenged the affront which I had received in the first; and that she had sent me all her ready money and jewels, to enable me to travel agreeably in foreign countries, until she should get the affair accommodated.

To pass over superfluous circumstances, I will only inform you, that I crossed New Castile, to the kingdom of Valencia, in order to embark at Denia, from whence I took a passage for Italy, where I put myself in a condition to visit different courts, and appear in a suitable character.

While far from my Helen, I endeavoured, as much as in me lay, to beguile my love and sorrows; she mourned my absence in secret at Coria. Instead of approving of the prosecution that her family set on foot against me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that all enmity might cease, and my return be hastened by a speedy accommodation. Six months

had already elapsed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have still triumphed over time, had she had nothing else but time to combat: but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western side of Galicia, came to Coria, to take possession of a rich estate which had been in vain disputed by his cousin, Don Miguel de Caprara; and he settled in that country, finding it more agreeable than his own. Combados was well made, had an agreeable polite behaviour, and was one of the most insinuating men in the world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity: he longed to see such a formidable lady: for this purpose, he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law; gave him admittance to his house, and the liberty of speaking in his presence to Doña Helena. The Galician soon fell in love with her. That was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his proposal; but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise, to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia, however, was in the interests of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents, to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chamber-maid by his remonstrances; and nevertheless, all their efforts during a whole year could only torment Doña Helena, without shaking her constancy in the least.

Combados seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves for him in vain, proposed an

expedient to overcome the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as she was. 'This (said he) is what I have contrived: we will suppose that a merchant of Coria has received a letter from an Italian man of business, in which, after a detail of things concerning commerce, are the following words:

'A Spanish cavalier, whose name is Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He calls himself nephew and sole heir of a rich widow who lives at Coria, under the name of Doña Eleonora de Laxarilla. He has demanded the daughter of a powerful nobleman in marriage, but will not succeed until the truth is known. I am desired to apply to you for this purpose: pray let me know, then, if you are acquainted with this Don Gaston, and in what the riches of his aunt consist; for your answer will decide the marriage.

'Parma, etc.'

The old man looked upon this trick as a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in love: and the waiting-woman, still less scrupulous than her master, approved of it very much. The invention seemed to them the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and, to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant, who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father, in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena, 'Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustine into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your fidelity to him. He is a fickle, perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter, which a merchant of

Coria has received from Italy.' Helena trembling took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunderstruck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears; but soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father with a resolute tone, 'Señor, you have been witness of my weakness, bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. 'Tis done. I now despise Don Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of mankind. But let us talk no more about him. Come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar: let my marriage precede that of the perfidious man who has so ill repaid my love.' Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter, applauded her vigorous resolution, and glad of the happy success of his stratagem, made haste to complete the wishes of my rival.

Doña Helena was thus ravished from me. She yielded herself suddenly to Combados, without listening to love, which at the bottom of her heart spoke in my behalf, or even doubting a moment of a piece of news which might have been suspected in a lover of less credulity. The haughty maid listened to nothing but her pride, and the resentment of the injury which she thought her beauty had received, prevailed over the interest of her tenderness. A few days after her marriage, however, she felt some remorse for having been so precipitate. She reflected that the merchant's letter might have been forged, and that suspicion gave her some uneasiness: but the amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her repose. His whole study was to amuse her; and in this he succeeded by a continual succession of various pleasures, which he had art enough to invent.

She seemed very well satisfied with such a gallant husband, and they lived together in perfect harmony, when my aunt accommodated my affair with the relations of Don Augustine; and wrote immediately to Italy, to advertise me of her success. Being then at Reggio, in the farthermost part of Calabria, I went over

into Sicily, from thence to Spain, and at length repaired to Coria on the wings of love. Doña Eleonora, who had not in her letter mentioned the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival, and observing that I was afflicted at the news, 'You are in the wrong, nephew (said she), to be so much grieved at the loss of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice, and banish from your memory a person unworthy of possessing a place in it.'

As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit which had been practised on Doña Helena, she was in the right to talk in this manner, and could not have given me more prudent advice; which, therefore, I promised to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I should find myself incapable of vanquishing my passion. I could not, however, resist my curiosity, to know how this marriage had been made, and to be informed of the particulars. I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend, Dame Teodora, whom I have mentioned before. I went to her house, and there by accident found Felicia, who, not expecting in the least to see me, was confounded, and endeavoured to go away, that she might avoid an explanation, which she concluded I would demand. I stopped her, saying, 'Why do you fly me? Is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman, of having refused me the hearing?'

'Señor (answered the waiting-woman), I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again, without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accomplice in seducing her.' 'O heaven! (cried I) have you the presumption to tell me so? Explain yourself immediately.' Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Doña Helena; and perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to

give me some consolation: she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigour of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

I pass over the infinite refusals she underwent, before she could prevail upon Doña Helena to see me. This, however, she accomplished; and it was concerted between them, that I should be privately admitted into the house of Don Blas, the first time he should go to an estate, where he usually spent a day or two in hunting. This design was soon put in execution: the husband set out for the country; I was informed of the occasion, and one night introduced into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation with reproaches; but my mouth was stopped. 'It is in vain to recall what is past (said the lady), the business here is not a fond reconciliation; and you are mistaken if you believe me disposed to flatter your inclination. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my only motive for giving my consent to this private interview, in consequence of the pressing instances which have been made, is to tell you from my own mouth, that henceforth you must study to forget me altogether. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate, had it been joined to yours; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, I cheerfully submit to its decrees.'

'How, madam! (answered I) is it not enough that I have lost you, and see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I am capable of loving! must I also banish you from my thought? You would deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only blessing that now remains. Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possible for any man whom you have once charmed, to retrieve his heart? Know yourself better, and cease exhorting me in vain, to chase your idea from my remembrance.' 'Well, then (she replied with precipitation), do you also cease to hope that I will favour your love with any return. I have but one

word to say: the wife of Don Blas shall never be the mistress of Don Gaston. Take your measures accordingly; fly from this place; and let us put a speedy end to a conversation with which I upbraid myself, in spite of the purity of my intentions; and which I shall think myself guilty in prolonging.'

At these words, which deprived me of the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet; I addressed her in the most pathetic manner; I even employed tears to melt her: but all this served only to excite, perhaps, some sentiments of pity, which she was careful to conceal, and which were sacrified to her duty. After having to no purpose exhausted all my moving expressions, by prayers and tears; my tenderness changed of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my sword, to stab myself before the eyes of the inexorable Helena; who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me, to prevent the consequence. 'Hold, Cogollos (said she), is it thus you consult my reputation? In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonour, and make my husband pass for an assassin.'

I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavour was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid, to save me from my own fatal design; and, without doubt, I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who, having been apprised of our interview, instead of going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry, to overhear our conversation, had not come and joined us with all expedition. 'Don Gaston (cried he, holding my arms), recall your scattered reason; and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you.'

'Is it your business (said I, interrupting Don Blas) to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your own hand, to plunge a poniard in my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprise me at night, in your wife's apartment? Is there more

required to rouse your revenge? Stab me at once, and rid yourself of a man who cannot cease adoring Doña Helena, until he ceases to live.' 'In vain (answered Don Blas) you endeavour to interest my honour so far, as to give you death: you are sufficiently punished by your rashness; and I am so well pleased with the virtuous sentiments of my wife, that I pardon the occasion which she took to show them. Take my advice, Cogollos (added he), do not despair like a weak lover, but submit to necessity with courage.'

The prudent Galician, by such discourse, calmed my rage a little, and waked my virtue: I retired with the design of removing far from Helena, and the place that she inhabited; and in two days returned to Madrid, where, resolving to employ myself wholly in making my fortune, I appeared at court, and there began to make friends: but I was so unlucky as to attach myself in particular to the Marquis de Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman, who being suspected of a design to deliver Portugal from the dominion of Spain, was imprisoned in the castle of Alicante, where he now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew that an intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and me, he caused me to be arrested also, and conducted to this place: that Minister believes that I am capable of being an accomplice in such a scheme; and he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said, 'Señor Cavalier, your honour can receive no stain from this disgrace, which will, doubtless, in the end, turn to your advantage. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment; in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.'

## CHAPTER VII

*Scipio finds Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and tells him a great deal of news*

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms. 'Señor Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison-gate, and asked if you were not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified.' 'Noble captain (said he, with tears in his eyes), don't reject the humble request I make, to know if Señor de Santillana is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a charitable action in allowing me to see him. You are looked upon in Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity; and I hope you will not refuse me the favour of conversing a moment with my dear master, who is not so guilty as unfortunate.' 'In short (continued Don Andrés), the young man expressed such a desire of seeing you, that I have promised to give him that satisfaction at night.'

I assured Tordesillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure than to admit that young man, who, probably, had something to communicate, which it imported me very much to know. I waited with impatience for the moment that was to offer my faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not doubt that it was he; and I was not mistaken. He was introduced into the tower in the evening; and his joy, which mine alone could equal, broke forth in extraordinary transports, when he saw me. For my part, I was so much overjoyed at sight of him, that I held out my arms, and he hugged me in his, without ceremony: the distinction between master and secretary were lost in this embrace; so glad were they to see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I interrogated Scipio about the condition in which he had left my house.

'You have no house (he replied), and, to spare you the trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I will tell you, in two words, what passed at home. Your effects were pillaged, as well by the soldiers, as by your own servants, who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid themselves their own wages with what they could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the address to save from their talons two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong box, and secured, by putting them into the custody of Salero, who will redeliver them as soon as you shall be released from this tower, where I believe you will not be boarded long at His Majesty's expense; because you were apprehended without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma.'

I asked how he came to know that his Excellency had no hand in my misfortune. 'O! as for that (said he), I took care to be well informed: a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke of Uceda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment.' 'Calderon (said he) having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Señora Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night-time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Señor de Santillana, resolved to be revenged on them as well as upon his mistress. With this view, he went privately to the Duke of Uceda, and discovered the whole affair. The Duke, ravished at having in his hand such a fair opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to use it: he informed the King of what he had heard, and represented to him with great zeal the perils to which the Prince had been exposed. This piece of news roused the indignation of his Majesty, who immediately ordered Sirena to be shut up in the house of correction, banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.' 'This (added Scipio) is what my friend told me; by which you see that your misfortune is the work of the Duke of Uceda, or rather of Calderon.'

From this information I imagined that my affairs

might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew's exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court: and I flattered myself that I should not be forgotten by his Excellency. What a fine thing hope is! It consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of my effects, which had been stolen; and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode, where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means that fortune had used to raise me to some great post: for I reasoned with myself in this manner: the partisans of the Prime Minister are Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and, in particular, Father Luis de Aliaga[1], who owes to his interest the place he at present possesses at court. With the assistance of these powerful friends, his Excellency will demolish all his foes; or perhaps the State will soon alter its appearance: his Majesty is very sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more, the Prince his son will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me from this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favours. Thus, already elevated with future pleasures, I scarce felt my present misfortune: but I believe the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed, as much as this hope, to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and integrity of Scipio, to be silent on that subject: I offered him the half of the money which he had preserved from the pillage; but this he refused: 'I expect (said he) another mark of acknowledgement.' As much surprised at his discourse as at his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. 'Don't let us part (answered he),

[1] The Dominican monk, Luis de Aliaga (1560-1626), was Philip III's confessor. Gil Blas overrated the friar's loyalty; though Aliaga obtained his post through the influence of Lerma, he was one of the chief agents in procuring his patron's dismissal.

allow me to attach my fortune to yours: I have a friendship for you which I never felt for any other master.' 'And I can assure thee, child (said I), there is no want of gratitude on my part; the very first moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance, or Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the association thou hast proposed; and will begin it, by entreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower.' 'Nothing can give me more pleasure (cried he), you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favour of him: your company is dearer to me than liberty itself: I will only go sometimes to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favourable to you: so that in me you will enjoy at once a confidant, courier, and spy.'

These advantages were too considerable to be rejected: I therefore kept along with me a person so useful, with the permission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

## CHAPTER VIII

*The motives and success of Scipio's first journey to Madrid. Gil Blas falls sick: the consequence of his distemper*

If it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, it must likewise be owned, that when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary, and no more ceremony: they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gaiety in Scipio's conversation; he might have been justly surnamed the good-humoured lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profited by his advice. 'Friend (said I to him one day), methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the Duke of Lerma: this could produce no bad effect: What is thy opinion of the matter?' 'Yes; but (answered he) the great are so different from themselves, at different times, that I don't know how your letter will be received: nevertheless, I am of opinion, that you should write in the meantime. Although the Minister loves you, you must not trust to his friendship, for being remembered by him, this kind of patron easily forgets those who are out of sight or hearing.'

Although this was but too true, I replied: 'I judge more favourably of my patron, to whose kindness for me I am no stranger: I am persuaded, that he pities my affliction, which incessantly presents itself to his mind: he, probably, waits until the King's wrath shall subside, before he takes me out of prison.' 'In good time (he resumed). I wish your opinion of his Excellency may be right: implore his assistance, then, in a very moving letter, which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver it into his own hand.'

I immediately called for paper and ink, and composed a morsel of eloquence, which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred even to the homilies of the Archbishop of Granada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would be moved with compassion, in reading the melancholy account which I gave him of the miserable condition in which I was (*not*); and in that confidence dispatched my courier; who no sooner arrived at Madrid, than he went to the Minister's house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. 'My lord (said Scipio, presenting to his Excellency the packet with which he was entrusted), one of your most faithful servants, stretched upon straw, in a dismal dungeon

of the tower of Segovia, most humbly entreats your Grace to read this letter, which a turnkey, out of pity, gave him liberty and means to write.' The Minister opened, and perused the letter: but although he beheld in it a picture capable of melting the most obdurate soul; far from seeming affected at my distress, he raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several persons present, said to the courier, with a furious air, 'Friend, tell Santillana that he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me, after the unworthy action he has committed, and for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must not depend upon my protection; for I abandon him to the resentment of the King.'

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding his confusion, endeavoured to intercede for me. 'My lord (he resumed), the poor prisoner will die of grief, when he hears the answer of your Excellency.' The Duke made no reply to my mediator, but by a stern look, and turned his back upon him. It was thus the Minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had in the amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain: and this ought to be a warning to all lesser agents, whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was replunged into the dire abyss of despondency, in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage sank apace, and, notwithstanding all that they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me, by degrees, into a most violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who, by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers

of the goddess Libitina.[1] 'Señor Gil Blas (said he, presenting them to me), here are two Hippocrates come to see you, they will set you afoot again in a little time.' I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should have certainly given them a very bad reception, had I been in the least desirous of living; but at that time I felt myself so much tired of life, that I was glad Tordesillas had put me into their hands.

'Señor Cavalier (said one of these doctors to me), in the first place, you must repose an entire confidence in our skill.' 'I have a most perfect dependence on it (answered I): with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers.' 'Yes (he replied), with God's help, you shall. At least, we will do our endeavour for that purpose.' These gentlemen actually behaved to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to another world. Don Andrés, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar, to prepare me for my end. The good father having done his duty, had already retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bedside. 'My dear friend (said I to him with a faint voice, so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken, and the bleedings I had undergone), I leave to thee one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias, to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it, if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude: the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my hard-heartedness has, perhaps, occasioned their death. If heaven hath preserved them, in spite of the indifference with which I requited their affection, give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them, from me, to pardon my unnatural behaviour.

[1] The goddess of earth and trees; but the point of the allusion in the text is that Libitina's temple at Rome was stored with materials used at funerals.

If they are no more, I charge thee to employ the money in causing prayers to be put up for the repose of their souls and mine.' So saying, I stretched out my hand, which he bathed with his tears, without being able to answer one word; so much was the poor young man afflicted at the prospect of losing me! This proves that the tears of an heir are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit: but I was balked. My doctors, having abandoned me, left the field free to Nature. I was saved by their desertion. The fever which, according to their prognostic, was to carry me off, quitted me immediately, as if it intended to give them the lie. I recovered gradually, and by the greatest good luck in the world, a perfect tranquillity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I then had no need of consolation: I entertained for riches and honours all the contempt which the opinion of approaching death had made me conceive; and now restored, as it were, to myself, blessed my misfortune. I thanked heaven for it, as for a particular favour, and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recall me. I proposed, rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design, and told me that, in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at Madrid. 'There is a thing come into my head (added he). I know a person who can serve you. She is the favourite waiting-woman of the Prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt everything to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison, notwithstanding the good treatment you receive in it.' 'Thou art in the right (answered I); go, my friend, and begin this negotiation, without loss of time. Would to heaven we were already in our retreat!'

## CHAPTER IX

*Scipio returns to Madrid, and procures the release of Gil Blas, on certain conditions. What course they steer together, when they leave the tower of Segovia, and the conversation that passes between them*

Scipio set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a *literato*. I loved, in particular, good works of morality, because I found in them, every moment, passages that flattered my aversion for the court, and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks, without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me with a gay air, 'This time, Señor de Santillana, I bring good news; madam the nurse interests herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my entreaty, in consideration of a hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that Prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask it of the King his father. I am come hither in a hurry, to apprise you of it, and shall return immediately, to put the finishing stroke to the work.' So saying, he left me, and went back to court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me that the Prince had, not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying, 'My dear Gil Blas, thank heaven you are free! the gates of this prison are open to you; but upon two conditions, which, perhaps, will give you a great deal of pain, and which I am obliged to inform you of, though not

without regret. His Majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to quit the kingdom of Castile within a month. I am very much mortified that you are prohibited from going to court.' 'And I am overjoyed at it (I replied): God knows what my opinion of it is! I expected but one favour from the King, and I have received two.'

Being assured that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollos, and returned a thousand thanks to Tordesillas, for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Señor Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way, 'If we are not rich enough to buy a magnificent estate, we can, at least, purchase a commodious one.' 'So we had but a hut (answered I), I should be satisfied with my condition: for, though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend, for the future, to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Methinks I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in hunting, and sometimes in fishing. Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is the best. A morsel of bread may satisfy us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centres wholly in ourselves; and this is so true, that the most delicious of my meals are not those in which the greatest delicacy and abundance reign. Frugality is a source of delights, and wonderfully conducive to health.'

'By your leave, Señor Gil Blas (said my secretary,

interrupting me), I am not altogether of your opinion, with regard to the pretended frugality you praise so much. Why should we live like Diogenes? if we indulge our appetites a little, we shall not find ourselves a bit the worse for it. Take my advice, and since we have, thank God, wherewithal to render our retreat agreeable, let us not make it the habitation of hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall have got possession of our land, we must fortify our house with good wines, and all other provisions suitable to people of taste, who do not quit the commerce of mankind, with a view of renouncing the conveniences of life; but rather to enjoy them with more tranquillity. "That which a man has in his house (says Hesiod)[1] never hurts him; whereas, that which he has not, may. It is better (adds the same author) for a man to have all things necessary in his possession, than in his wish only."'

'How the devil, Mr. Scipio (cried I), come you to know the Greek poets? Ha! where did you pick up acquaintance with Hesiod?' 'In the house of a learned man (he replied). I served a pedant at Salamanca some time. He was a great commentator, and would toss you up a large volume in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from books in his library, and translated into the Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuensis, I retained in my memory a great number of sentences, as remarkable as that which I repeated.' 'If that be the case (said I), your memory is well garnished. But, to return to our scheme, in what kingdom of Spain do you think we should establish our philosophical residence?' 'I vote for Aragon (replied my confidant), we shall there find charming spots, where we may lead a delicious life.' 'Well (said I), be it so. Let us settle in Aragon. I consent to the proposal; and I wish we may there find a place of abode, that will afford all those pleasures with which I feast my imagination.'

[1] *The Works and Days*, 363-365.

## CHAPTER X

*Their behaviour at Madrid. Gil Blas meets a certain person in the street. The consequence of that meeting*

When we arrived at Madrid, we alighted at a small house, where Scipio had lodged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did, was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. 'I protest to you (said he), I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain; and therefore, gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant.' 'You were in the right (answered I): for besides, that this match is more solid, a citizen, who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with monsieur his son-in-law.'

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the purpose, 'Señor Gabriel (added I), be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles, which——' 'Your money is ready for you' (said the goldsmith, interrupting me), and conducting us into his closet, showed us the two bags, with notes upon them, containing these words: 'These bags of doubloons belong to Señor Gil Blas de Santillana.' 'There they are (said he), just as they were committed to my care.'

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me; and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home, where we began to examine our double pistoles. The tale was just, after having deducted fifty, which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Aragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided linen, underclothing, and clothes.

While I was going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron Steinbach, that officer of the German Guards, in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted this cavalier, who knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. 'I am extremely glad (said I to him) to see your lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Caesar and Don Alphonso de Leyva.' 'I can give you a certain account of them both (answered he), for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago they came to town to thank his Majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received, in consideration of the services which his ancestors had done the State. He is made Governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired anybody to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous: and this shows that our monarch delights in recompensing valour.'

Though I knew much better than the Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know anything of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that, in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with him immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or not he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the Baroness; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head within his arms, saying, with marks of real joy, 'Santillana, have I found you again! I am overjoyed at meeting with you! it was not my fault that ever we parted: for, I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. You had no regard to my request; but I am far from being angry with you on that account. I am even beholden to you, for the motive of your retreat. But, since that time, you ought to have let

me hear from you, and spared me the trouble of sending in vain, to find you at Granada, where (as Don Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote to me), you were.'

After this gentle reproach, he continued, 'Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here. Be assured that I share as much as ever in what concerns you.' 'Señor (answered I), something less than four months ago I filled a pretty considerable post at court; having had the honour to be secretary and confidant to the Duke of Lerma.' 'Is it possible? (cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment) what! were you in the confidence of the Prime Minister?' 'I gained his favour (said I), and lost it in the manner you shall hear.' I then recounted the whole story, and ended my narration with the resolution I had taken, to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Caesar having listened very attentively, replied, 'My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate, which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm, which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place, and it is a present which we are in a condition to make, without incommoding ourselves in the least. I dare answer for my father's consent, and know that it will give great pleasure to Seraphina.'

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and more charmed with the goodness of his heart, than with the value of his favour, 'Señor (said I), your behaviour enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you: and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgement.' My Governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pretended service

was. I told him; and the information redoubled his surprise. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by my interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity, 'Gil Blas (said he), since I owe my post to you, I don't intend to confine my gratuity to the little farm of Lirias, I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly.'

'Halt there, Don Alphonso (said I, interrupting him), don't awake my avarice. I have too well experienced, that riches serve only to corrupt my morals. I accept, with all my heart, your farm of Lirias, where I will live comfortably, with the money which I have already in my possession. But that is sufficient; and far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden to one in retirement, who seeks only to enjoy quiet.'

While we conversed in this manner, Don Caesar coming in, expressed as much joy at seeing me, as his son had done before; and when he understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary's house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to the house of Baron de Steinbach, and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him, that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. 'How much (said he) may this small domain be worth?' 'Five hundred ducats per annum (I replied), and I can assure thee, it is a lovely solitude, which I know perfectly well, having been there several times, in

quality of steward to the lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalaviar, in a hamlet of five or six houses, and in the midst of a charming country.'

'What pleases me still more in it (cried Scipio), is, that we shall have fine vension, with Benicarlo wine and excellent muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage.' 'I long as much as thou dost to be there (I replied), but I must first make a tour to Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum, on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I failed in my duty.' Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. 'Let us lose no time (said he); I have already secured a chaise, let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo.' 'Yes, my friend (I replied), let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my being. Our journey will not be long. We shall soon see ourselves settled in our hamlet, where, when I arrive, I will write over the door of my house, these two Latin verses, in letters of gold':

Inveni portum. Spes et Fortuna valete.
Sat me lusistis, ludite nunc alios.[1]

[1] The original Greek epigram will be found in J. Fr. Dübner's *Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina* (Parisiis, 1864-1890), ii, 10. The following translation is ascribed to the English grammarian William Lily, who died in 1522.

Inveni portum : Spes et Fortuna valete.
Nil mihi vobiscum : ludite nunc alios.

This Latin version is also attributed to Janus Pannonius, Bishop of Fünfkirchen, in Hungary. For further details see *Notes and Queries* (London, 1898), Ninth Series, ii, 41, 221.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK

# BOOK X

## CHAPTER I

*Gil Blas sets out for Asturias, passes through Valladolid, where he visits his old master Doctor Sangrado, and meets, by accident, with Señor Manuel Ordoñez, director of the hospital*

While I was getting ready for my departure from Madrid, with Scipio, on my journey to Asturias, Pope Paul the Fifth named the Duke of Lerma to the Cardinalship[1]. This Pope being desirous of establishing the Inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested that Minister with the purple, that he might engage him to make King Philip consent to such a laudable design. All those who were well acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, like me, that the Church had made a fine acquisition.

Scipio, who would rather have seen me in a brilliant post at court, than buried in solitude, advised me to present myself before the Cardinal: 'Perhaps (said he) his Eminence seeing you out of prison by the King's order, will think it unnecessary to appear any longer irritated against you, and take you into his service again.' 'Master Scipio (answered I), you seem to have forgot that I obtained my liberty on condition that I should quit the two Castiles immediately. Besides, do you think me already disgusted with my castle of Lirias? I have told you once, and now repeat it, that if the Duke of Lerma would restore me to his good graces, and even offer me the place of Don

[1] Lerma was created Cardinal on March 26, 1618.

Rodrigo de Calderon, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken. I will go in quest of my parents at Oviedo, and retire with them to Valencia. As for thee, my friend, if thou repentest of having joined thy fortune to mine, speak; I am ready to give thee one-half of my money, and thou mayst stay at Madrid, and push thy fortune as far as it will go.'

'How (replied my secretary, nettled at my words)! can you suspect me of having any repugnance to follow you to your retreat? My zeal and attachment are injured by your suspicion. What! Scipio, that faithful servant, who, to share your affliction, would have willingly passed the remainder of his days with you in the tower of Segovia; shall he feel any regret in accompanying you to an abode that promises him a thousand pleasures? No, no, I have no desire of dissuading you from your resolution. I must own I was a little mischievous, when I advised you to show yourself to the Duke of Lerma: I wanted to sound you that I might know if some deeds of ambition did not still remain in your breast. Well, then, since you are so much detached from pomp and grandeur, let us abandon the court immediately, to go and enjoy those innocent and delicious pleasures, of which we have formed such charming ideas.' We actually set out in a few days, mounted together in a chaise drawn by two good mules, and conducted by a young man, with whom I thought proper to augment my train. We lay the first night at Alcalá de Henares, and the second at Segovia[1]; whence (without staying to visit the generous keeper Tordesillas), we got to Peñafiel, on the Duero; and next day to Valladolid. At sight of this last place, I could not help heaving a profound sigh; and my companion, who perceived it, asking the cause, 'Child (said I), I practised physic a long time in this city, and my conscience upbraids

[1] Lesage makes a geographical slip in tracing the route of the travellers. Alcalá de Henares is situated some ten miles east of Madrid, and Segovia lies about three times as far to the west of Madrid.

me with it this moment! methinks all the sick people whom I killed, come out of their tombs, and seem ready to tear me in pieces.' 'What a fancy is this! (said my secretary) truly, Señor de Santillana, you are too good. Why should you repent of having laboured in your vocation? Observe the oldest physicians; do they feel any such remorse? No, sure: they still go on in their old course, with the utmost tranquillity, throwing the blame of all fatal accidents on Nature, and claiming honour from every lucky event.'

'True (said I), Doctor Sangrado, whose method I faithfully followed, was a man of that character. Though he saw twenty people die daily among his hands, he was so well convinced of the excellence of bleeding the arm, and plentiful draughts of warm water, which he called his two specifics in all kinds of distempers, that, instead of suspecting his remedies, he believed that his patients died because they had not drank and been blooded enough.' 'Egad! (cried Scipio, bursting into a loud laugh) this must be an incomparable person!' 'If thou hast any curiosity to see and hear him (said I), thou mayst satisfy it to-morrow morning, provided Sangrado be still alive, and at Valladolid, which I can scarce believe, for he was very old when I left him, and that happened a good many years ago.'

Our first care, when we arrived at our inn, was to inquire about that doctor, who we learned was not yet dead; but being too old to visit patients, or move about, he had given place to three or four doctors, who had acquired reputation by a new method of practice, which did not succeed a whit better than his. We resolved to stay all next day at Valladolid, as well to rest our horses, as to visit Señor Sangrado, to whose house we repaired about ten o'clock in the morning, and found him sitting in an easy chair, with a book in his hand. As soon as he perceived us, he got up, and coming towards me, with a firm step, considering his age, which was seventy, asked our business with him. 'Mr. Doctor (said I to him),

don't you recollect me? I have the honour to be one of your disciples. Don't you remember a young man called Gil Blas, who formerly lived in your house, and was your deputy?' 'What! is it you, Santillana? (answered he, embracing me) I should not have known you again. I am very glad to see you. What have you been doing since you left me? You have doubtless practised physic all along.' 'I was indeed (said I), sufficiently inclined to that profession, which, however, some strong reasons have hindered me from exercising.'

'So much the worse (replied Sangrado). With the principles which you imbibed from me, you would have become an expert physician, provided heaven had given you grace to preserve yourself from the dangerous love of chemistry. Ah, my son! (continued he with an air of sorrow) what a change has happened in physic within these few years! That art is robbed of all its honour and dignity. That art, which in all times hath regarded the life of man, is now a prey to rashness, presumption, and *impéritie*[1]; for their actions speak, and in a little time the very stones will cry out against the cabals of these new practitioners. *Lapides clamabunt!* There are in this city physicians (or such as call themselves so) who are yoked to the triumphal car of antimony. *Currus triumphalis antimonii*[2]. Truants from the school of Paracelsus, adorers of *kermes*[3], accidental curers, who make the whole science of medicine consist in knowing how to prepare chemical drugs. What shall I say? everything is turned topsy-turvy in their method. Bleeding at the foot, for example, hitherto so seldom practised, is now almost the only evacuation in use[4].

[1] *Impéritie*=empiricism.

[2] Sangrado refers to Basile Valentin's treatise, *Le Char triomphal de l'antimoine* (Paris, 1677).

[3] *Kermes* is defined as 'amorphous trisulphide of antimony, of a brilliant red colour.'

[4] Sangrado adopts the hostile attitude to this innovation assumed by Hecquet in his *Observations sur la saignée du pied* (1724).

Those purgatives which were formerly gentle and benign, are now changed for emetics[1] and *kermes*. The whole is a mere chaos, where each does what he thinks proper, transgressing those bounds of order and sagacity which our ancient masters had so wisely prescribed.'

Whatever inclination I had to laugh at such a comical declamation, I had power to resist it. I did more. I exclaimed against *kermes*, without knowing what it was, and at a venture wished those who invented it at the devil. Scipio, observing that I made myself merry with this scene, had a mind to act in it also. 'Mr. Doctor (said he to Sangrado), as I am grand-nephew to a physician of the old school, give me leave to revolt with you against chemical medicines. My late grand-uncle (rest his soul) was such a warm partisan of Hippocrates, that he often battled with quacks who spoke disrespectfully of that prince of physic. True blood will always show itself; I would willingly perform the office of executioner to those ignorant innovators, of whom you complain with such eloquence and justice. What disorder must these wretches create in civil society!'

'That disorder (replied the doctor) is more extensive than you imagine. My having published a book against the robbers of medicine was of no use[2]. On the contrary, the mischief daily increases. The surgeons, mad with the ambition of acting as physicians, think themselves sufficiently qualified, when there is nothing to be done but to give *kermes* and emetics, to which they add blooding at the foot, according to their own fancy. They even proceed so far as to mix *kermes* in apozems and cordial potions; and so they are on a par with your celebrated prescribers.

[1] The use of emetics was opposed by the older school: Louis XIV's chief physician, Antoine Vallot, ventured to prescribe them during the illness of the King in 1658.

[2] This passage establishes the identification of Sangrado with Hecquet, author of *Le Brigandage de la médicine* (Paris, 1732).

This contagion has spread also among the cloisters. There are some monks who act both as apothecaries and surgeons[1]. Those apes of medicine apply themselves to chemistry, and compose pernicious drugs, with which they abridge the lives of their reverend fathers. In fine, there are more than sixty monasteries of men and women in Valladolid; so you may judge what ravage is made in them, by *kermes* united with emetics and blooding in the foot.' 'Señor Sangrado (said I), you have reason to be incensed against these poisoners. I groan in concert with you, and share your alarms for the lives of mankind, which are so manifestly threatened by a method so different from yours. I am very much afraid that chemistry will one day occasion the total ruin of physic; in the same manner as false money proves destructive to kingdoms. Heaven grant that the fatal day be not too near.'

At this part of our conversation, an old maid-servant brought in for the doctor a little light bread on a salver, and a glass with two bottles, one of which was filled with water, and the other with wine. After he had eaten a morsel of the bread, he took a draught of liquor, in which, indeed, there were two-thirds of water, but that did not save him from the reproach which he gave me a handle to vent against him. 'Ah, ah! (said I) Mr. Doctor, have I caught you in the act? You drink wine, then! You who have always declared against that liquor: you who, during three-fourths of your life, have drunk nothing but water. How long have you acted so inconsistently with yourself? You can't excuse yourself on account of your age; since, in one part of your writings, you define old age as a natural decay, that withers and consumes us; and in consequence of that definition, deplore the ignorance of those people who style wine the milk of old men. What, therefore, can you say in your own justification?'

[1] A fling at the Carthusian, Frère Simon, who prescribed for Louis XIV, and was credited with introducing *kermes* into France.

'You declare war against me very unjustly (replied the old physician). Had I drank pure wine, you would have had some reason to look upon me as an unfaithful observer of my own method; but you see that my wine is very much diluted.' 'Another inconsistency, my dear master (said I); don't you remember that you blamed the Canon Sedillo for drinking wine, although it was mixed with a great deal of water[1]? Confess freely, that you are sensible of your error, and that wine is not a fatal liquor, as you advanced in your works, provided it be drank with moderation.'

These words perplexed the doctor, who could not deny that he had forbid the use of wine in his books, but shame and vanity hindered him from owning that my reproach was just, and he did not know what answer to make. To extricate him out of this dilemma, I shifted the discourse; and in a moment after, took leave of him, exhorting him to keep his ground still against the new practitioners. 'Courage, Señor Sangrado (said I to him), be indefatigable in decrying *kermes*, and combat against blooding in the foot without ceasing. If, in spite of your zeal and physical orthodoxy, that empirical race should succeed in ruining true discipline, you will at least enjoy the consolation of having done your utmost to maintain it.'

As my secretary and I returned to the inn, conversing together about the diverting and original character of the doctor, a man of about five-and-fifty or sixty years of age passed us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I viewed him attentively, and easily recollected him to be Señor Manuel Ordoñez, that pious director of the hospital, of whom such honourable mention is made in the first volume of my memoirs. I accosted him with great demonstrations of respect, saying, 'Health to the venerable and discreet Señor Manuel Ordoñez, the most proper man in the world to manage the poor's money.' At these words, he

[1] See Book II, Chapter ii, Vol. i, p. 90.

eyed me narrowly, and answered, that he remembered my features, but could not recollect the place where he had seen me. 'I was often at your house (said I) while you had in your service a friend of mine called Fabricio Nuñez.' 'Ah! I remember you now (answered the Director with a satirical smile), by this token, that you were both arch lads, and played together many tricks of youth. Well, what is become of poor Fabricio? Every time I think of him, I am uneasy about his circumstances.'

'My motive (said I) for taking the liberty of stopping you in the street, was to give you an account of him. Fabricio is at Madrid, employed in composing miscellanies.' 'What do you call miscellanies?' (answered he). 'That is (said I), he writes in prose and verse. He composes comedies and romances; in a word, he is a young fellow of genius, and is very well received in the best families.' 'But (said the Director) how stands he with his baker?' 'Not quite so well (answered I), as with people of fashion: between you and me, I believe he is as poor as Job.' 'Oh! I don't at all doubt it (cried Ordoñez). Let him make his court to noblemen as much as he pleases, his complaisance, flattery, and cringing will bring still less into his pockets than his works. Remember I prophesy, that you will one day see him in the hospital[1].'

[1] This dismal prophecy would remind most contemporary readers of a well-known epigram by François de Maynard: see his *Oeuvres poétiques* (Paris, 1885-1888), III, 102-103.

Vn rare Escriuain comme toy
Deuroit enrichir sa famille,
D'autant d'argent que le feu Roy
En auoit mis dans la Bastille.

Mais les vers ont perdu leur prix,
Et pour les excellens Esprits
La Faueur des Princes est morte.

Malherbe, en cet âge brutal,
Pegase est vn cheval qui porte
Les grands Hommes à l'Hospital.

'That may very well be (I replied). Poetry has brought many a one to that catastrophe. My friend Fabricio would have done much better, had he remained with your Worship. He would by this time have been rolling in gold.' 'At least, he would have been in very easy circumstances (said Manuel). I had a regard for him, and would have, by raising him from post to post, procured a solid settlement for him in the hospital, had he not been whimsical enough to set up for a wit. He composed a comedy which was acted by the players of this city. The piece succeeded; and from that moment his head turned. He believed himself another Lope de Vega; and preferring the smoke of public applause to the real advantages which my friendship prepared for him, demanded his discharge. I remonstrated in vain, that he was going to quit the substance, and run after the shadow. I could not detain this madman, who was possessed with the fury of writing. He did not know his own interest (added he). The young man who succeeded him in my service is a living proof of this. Having more judgement and less understanding than Fabricio, he applied himself wholly to the execution of his commissions, and studied to please me. Accordingly, I have promoted him as he deserved, and he now actually enjoys two employments at the hospital, the lesser of which is more than sufficient to maintain an honest man, encumbered with a large family.'

## CHAPTER II

*Gil Blas continues his journey, and arrives safely at Oviedo. The condition in which he found his parents. The death of his father, and the consequence thereof*

From Valladolid, we got in four days to Oviedo, without meeting with any bad accident on the road, notwithstanding the proverb, which says that robbers

smell the money of travellers afar off. We should have been, however, a pretty good booty; and two inhabitants of the cavern[1] would have been sufficient to carry off our doubloons with ease; for I had not learned to grow valiant at court; and Bertrand, my *mozo de mulas*[2], did not seem of a humour to die in defence of his master's purse: Scipio was the only Hector among us.

It being night when we arrived in town, we went to lodge at an inn hard by the house of my uncle, the Canon Gil Perez. I was willing to understand the situation of my parents, before I should appear as their son; and for this piece of information, I could not apply to a more proper person than my landlord or his wife, who I knew to be people who were very well acquainted with the affairs of their neighbours. In effect, the landlord, after having eyed me with attention, recollected my face, crying, 'By St. Antony of Padua[3]! this is the son of honest usher Blas

[1] The cavern in which Gil Blas had lived with Rolando and his gang: see Book I, Chapter iv.

[2] *Mozo de mulas* = muleteer.

[3] Fernando Bulhon, or Bulloes (1195-1231), a native of Lisbon, took the name of Antony on joining the Franciscan Order in 1220; he first visited Padua, with which city his name is commonly associated, in 1227; he was canonized the year after his death, and his feast is celebrated on June 13. He is alleged to have restored to its place the foot of a youth who had cut it off in a fit of remorse: see F. A. Carlos das Neves, *O Grande Thaumaturgo de Portugal, Sto. Antonio de Lisboa* (Oporto, 1899).

Owing to his successful missionary labours St. Antony of Padua is called 'the restorer of the lost, and the revealer of hidden treasure,' and in several Roman Catholic countries a grossly materialistic interpretation has been put upon this title by the uneducated, who habitually invoke the Saint when searching for anything that is mislaid or lost. Hence the exclamation is appropriate enough in the mouth of the illiterate landlord, who had regarded Gil Blas as lost to Oviedo. The practice of appealing to St. Antony of Padua as a finder of lost

de Santillana.' 'Yes, truly (said his wife), it is he indeed! he is very little altered: it is the same little brisk Gil Blas, who had always more wit in his head than beef on his bones. I think I see him still coming to this house, with his bottle, for wine to his uncle's supper.'

'Madam (said I), you have a very happy memory; but pray tell me news of my family; my father and mother are, doubtless, in no very agreeable situation.' 'That is but too true (replied the landlady): how bad soever you may think their condition is, you cannot conceive them more distressed than they are. Gil Perez, honest man, has lost the use of one-half of his body, by the palsy; and, in all appearance, cannot last long: your father, who has lived of late with the Canon, has got inflammation of the lungs, and, in fact, is at this moment in the agonies of death; and your mother is far from being well, though obliged to serve as a nurse to both.'

On this report, which made me feel that I was a son, I left Bertrand with my equipage at the inn; and, attended by my secretary, who would not quit me, repaired to my uncle's house. As soon as I appeared before my mother, an emotion which I caused in her, signified my presence, before her eyes had distinguished my features. 'Son (said she, with a melancholy air, after she had embraced me), come and see your father breathe his last: you are come in time enough to be struck with that cruel spectacle.' So saying, she carried me into a chamber where the unfortunate Blas de Santillana, lying on a bed that too well denoted the poverty of an usher, drew near his exit. Though he was environed by the shades of death, his senses had not quite forsaken him. 'My dear friend (said

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property is a modern innovation dating from the seventeenth century, when the legends told of such earlier Saints as St. Louis of Toulouse—generally connected with finding a purse or ring in a fish—were transferred to the Portuguese Franciscan: see C. de Mandach, *Saint Antoine de Padoue et l'art italien* (Paris, 1899), 323.

my mother to him), here is your son Gil Blas, who begs your forgiveness for the sorrows he has occasioned, and asks your blessing.' At these words, my father opening his eyes, which death had begun to close, fixed them upon me; and observing, in spite of his own lamentable condition, that I was very much affected with the loss of him, seemed moved at my grief, and attempted to speak; but had not strength enough to utter one word. I took hold of one of his hands; and while I bathed it with my tears, unable to pronounce a syllable, he expired, as if he had waited for my arrival, before he would breathe his last.

My mother was too well prepared for his death, to be immoderately afflicted at it; and I was, perhaps, more grieved than she, although my father had never given me the least mark of friendship in his life. My being his son, was a sufficient cause for me to lament him; besides, I upbraided myself for not having assisted him in his distress: and when I reflected on my hard-heartedness, looked upon myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather, as a downright parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards beheld stretched on a truckle-bed, and in a miserable condition, made me feel fresh remorse. 'Unnatural son! (said I to myself) contemplate, for thy punishment, the misery of thy parents. If thou hadst given them a small share of the superfluity which was in thy possession, before thou wast imprisoned, they would have enjoyed conveniences which the revenue of the prebend could not afford; and, perhaps, thou wouldst have prolonged the life of thy father.'

The unfortunate Gil Perez was become a child again, having lost both his memory and judgement. In vain did I press him in my arms, with marks of real affection; he seemed insensible of what I did. When my mother told him, that I was his nephew Gil Blas, he looked at me with an unmeaning eye, and made no answer. Though blood and gratitude had not obliged me to lament an uncle to whom I owed so much, I could

not have beheld him in a condition so worthy of pity, without feeling the emotions of compassion.

All this time Scipio remained in a melancholy silence, partook of my affliction, and, through friendship, mingled his sighs with mine. As I concluded that my mother, after such a long absence, wanted to converse with me, and that she might be uneasy at the presence of a man whom she did not know, I took him aside, and said, 'Go, my child, go, and repose thyself at the inn; and leave me here with my mother, who perhaps will think thee one too many in a conversation that will wholly turn on family affairs.' Scipio, rather than put us under any restraint, retired; and I actually discoursed with my mother the best part of the night. We gave one another a faithful account of what had happened to each of us since my departure from Oviedo: she was minute in the detail of those mortifications she had suffered in the families where she had been duenna, and told me an infinite number of things on that subject, which I was glad my secretary did not hear, though he was entrusted with all my secrets. With all the respect that I owe to the memory of a mother, I must own that the good lady was a little prolix in her narrations; and she would have spared me three-fourths of her history had she suppressed all the trivial circumstances of it: she concluded at length, and I began mine. I passed lightly over all my adventures; but when I came to the visit which I received at Madrid from the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, I enlarged upon that article: 'I own (said I to my mother), I gave that young man a very bad reception; who, to be revenged, has, doubtless, drawn a very frightful picture of me.' 'In that he did not fail (answered she): he told us that he found you so proud of the favour of the Prime Minister, that you scarce deigned to recollect him: and when he described our distress, heard him with the utmost indifference. As parents (added she) always endeavour to find excuses for the behaviour of their children, we could not

believe that you had such a bad heart: your arrival at Oviedo justifies our good opinion of you, and your present sorrow confirms your apology.'

'You judge too favourably of me (I replied); there is a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report: when he visited me, I was wholly engrossed by the care of making my fortune; and the ambition that possessed me would not permit me to think of my parents. It must not, therefore, be wondered at, if, in this disposition, I gave an unwelcome reception to a man, who, accosting me rudely, told me in a brutal manner, that, hearing I was richer than a Jew, he came to advise me to send you some money, of which you stood in great need: he even reproached my indifference for my family in very indecent terms. I was shocked at his freedom; and, losing patience, pushed him by the shoulders out of my closet. I own I was to blame in this matter: I ought to have reflected, that it was not your fault, if the grocer wanted manners; and that his advice was never the worse for its being brutally delivered.

'This was what I represented to myself immediately after I had sent Muscada about his business. My blood spoke in your behalf; I recalled all my duty to my parents; and, blushing for shame for having performed it so ill, felt remorse, which, nevertheless, can do me no honour with you, because it was soon stifled by avarice and ambition: but having been afterwards imprisoned, by the King's order, in the tower of Segovia, I fell dangerously ill, and that happy distemper hath restored your son to you. Yes, it was my disease and imprisonment that made nature resume all her rights, and entirely detached me from court. I now thirst after solitude; and my sole motive for coming to Asturias, was to entreat you to share with me the sweets of a retired life. If you don't refuse my request, I will conduct you to an estate which I have in the kingdom of Valencia, where we shall live at our ease. You may believe, I intended to carry my father thither also; but since heaven hath

ordained it otherwise, let me have the satisfaction of enjoying my mother's company, and of making amends to her for my past neglect, by all imaginable care.' 'I am very much obliged to your laudable intention (said my mother), and would go without hesitation, if I saw no objections in the case; but I will not leave my brother, your uncle, in this deplorable condition, and I am so much used to this country, that I cannot now quit it. However, as the thing deserves due consideration, I will think of it at leisure: let us at present take care of your father's funeral.' 'That (said I), shall be ordered by the young man whom you saw along with me; he is my secretary, and has such zeal and understanding, that we may depend upon his care.'

Scarce had I pronounced these words, when Scipio returned, it being already day; and asking if we had any occasion for his service in our perplexity, I told him that he came very seasonably to receive an important order which I had to give. When he knew what the business was, 'Enough (said he); I have already contrived the whole ceremony, and you may trust to my discretion.' 'Beware (said my mother) of making a pompous burial: it cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the town knew to be a very indigent usher.' 'Madam (replied Scipio), had he been still more needy that he was, I would not abate two farthings of the expense: for in this I regard my master only; he has been the Duke of Lerma's favourite; and his father ought to be nobly interred.'

I approved of my secretary's design, and even desired him to spare no cost: the remains of vanity, which I still preserved, broke out on this occasion: I flattered myself, that in being at a great expense upon a father, who left me no inheritance, I should make the world admire my generous behaviour. My mother, for her part, whatever modesty she affected, was not ill-pleased to see her husband buried in splendour. We therefore gave *carte blanche* to Scipio, who, without loss of time, took all necessary measures for a superb funeral.

He succeeded but too well; and performed such magnificent obsequies, that he brought the whole city and suburbs on my back; all the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the highest to the lowest, being shocked at my ostentation. 'This Minister (said one) is in a great hurry to lay out money on his father's interment; but he was in none to maintain him.' 'He would have done better (said another), had he succoured his father while he was alive, than to honour him so much, now that he is dead.' In short, reproaches were not spared; every one had a fling at me: but they did not stop here; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and me, as we came out of the church, loaded us with revilings, and hooted us as we walked along, and conducted Bertrand to the inn with a shower of stones.

To disperse the mob that was gathered before my uncle's house, there was a necessity for my mother's showing herself, and declaring, that she was perfectly well satisfied with my conduct. Some ran to the public-house, in order to demolish my chaise; and this they certainly would have done, if the landlord and his wife had not found means to appease their fury, and dissuade them from their design.

All these affronts, which were the effects of the young grocer's report of me through the city, inspired me with such aversion for my townsmen, that I determined speedily to leave Oviedo, where, otherwise, I should perhaps have stayed a good while. This I plainly told my mother, who being very much mortified at the reception with which the people had regaled me, did not oppose my departure. What remained now, was to know how I should dispose of her. 'Mother (said I), since my uncle wants your assistance, I will not press you to go along with me at present; but as, in all appearance, he has not long to live, you must promise to come to my estate immediately after his decease.'

'I will make no such promise (answered my mother), being resolved to pass the rest of my days in Asturias, in perfect independence.' 'Will you not always

(said I) be mistress in my house?' 'I don't know that (she resumed): you may fall in love with some young girl, and marry her; then I shall be her mother-in-law; consequently, we cannot live together.' 'You foresee misfortune (said I) at too great a distance: I have no intention to marry; but if the fancy should strike me, depend upon it, I will oblige my wife to be implicitly submissive to your will.' 'That is promising too much (resumed my mother), I should want security for my bondsman; and would not even swear that, in our disputes, you would not take the part of your wife rather than mine, how far soever she might be in the wrong.'

'You talk reasonably, madam (cried my secretary, joining in the conversation), I am of your opinion, that submissive daughters-in-law are very rare. In the meantime, to accommodate matters between you and my master, since you are absolutely resolved to live in Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must grant you an allowance of one hundred pistoles, which I shall bring hither every year. By these means, the mother and son will live very happy at the distance of two hundred leagues from one another.' The parties concerned approved of the proposal: I paid the first year's annuity in advance, and quitted Oviedo next morning before break of day, that I might not be treated by the populace like another St. Stephen. Such was the reception I met with in my own country! An excellent lesson for those people of the common rank, who, after having got a fortune abroad, return to the place of their nativity and affect the gentleman of importance!

## CHAPTER III

*Gil Blas departs for the kingdom of Valencia, and at length arrives at Lirias. A description of his house. His reception; with an account of the people he found there*

We took the road to Leon, then to Valencia; and continuing our journey, by small stages, in ten days arrived at the city of Segorba: from whence, next morning, we repaired to my estate, which is but three leagues distant from it. As we drew near this place, my secretary observed, with great attention, all the country-seats that presented themselves to his view on the right and left; and when he perceived one of a grand appearance, he always pointed to it with his finger, and said, 'I wish that was our retreat.' 'I don't know, friend (said I to him), what idea thou hast formed of our habitation; but if you imagine that it is a magnificent house, like that on some great nobleman's estate, I tell you beforehand that you are furiously mistaken.

'If thou hast not a mind to be the dupe of thy own imagination, represent to thyself the small house which Horace enjoyed in the country of the Sabines, near Tibur, and which he received as a present from Maecenas.' 'Then I must expect to see a cottage!' (cried Scipio). 'Remember (I replied), that I have always given you a very modest description of it; and this moment, thou mayst thyself judge, whether or not I am a faithful painter. Cast thy eyes towards the Guadalaviar, and observe on its banks, hard by that small hamlet, the house consisting of four little pavilions; that is my castle.' 'How the devil! (said my secretary with surprise) that house is a perfect jewel! Besides the noble air that these pavilions give it, it is extremely well built, and surrounded by a more charming country than even the neighbourhood of Seville, which is called, by way of excellence, the

terrestrial paradise. Had we chosen our abode, it could not have been more to my taste; a river waters it with its stream, and a thick wood lends its shade, when we are inclined to walk in the middle of the day. What an amiable solitude this is! Ah, my dear master, in all appearance, we shall not quit this place in a hurry.' 'I am overjoyed (answered I), that you are so well satisfied with our asylum, which is more agreeable than you imagine.' Conversing in this manner, we approached the house, the gate of which was thrown open, as soon as Scipio signified that it was Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, who came to take possession of his castle. At that name, so respected by those who heard it pronounced, my chaise was admitted into a large court, where I alighted: then leaning on Scipio, and taking state upon myself, I went into a hall, where I was scarce arrived, when seven or eight servants appeared. They said they came to present their homage to their new master; that Don Caesar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them for my service; one in quality of cook, another as cook's assistant, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as lackeys, with orders to receive no money from me; these two noblemen intending to defray all the expense of my housekeeping. Master Joachim, the cook, who was the principal, and spokesman of these domestics, gave me to understand, that he had laid in a large stock of the best wines in Spain; and told me that, as to eating, he hoped a young fellow like him, who had been cook six years to the Archbishop of Valencia, must know how to compose ragouts that would tickle my palate. 'I will (added he) fall presently to work, and produce a sample of my skill. Take a walk, señor, while dinner is getting ready; visit your castle, and see if it be in a habitable condition.'

I leave the reader to judge whether or not I neglected this visit; and Scipio, still more curious than I, dragged me from room to room. We surveyed the whole house from top to bottom; the least corner (as we imagined)

did not escape our interested curiosity; and I had everywhere occasion to admire the bounty of Don Caesar and his son. Among other things, I was struck with the appearance of two apartments, which were as well furnished as they possibly could be, without magnificence: one of them was hung with Arras tapestry, and had in it a bed and chairs of velvet, still very handsome, though made while the Moors possessed the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other was in the same taste, consisting of hangings made of old yellow Genoa damask, with a bed and elbow-chairs of the same stuff, adorned with fringes of blue silk. All these effects, which would have been little valued in an inventory, appeared to be very considerable. After having thoroughly examined everything, my secretary and I returned to the hall, where the cloth was laid with two covers. We sat down at table, and in a moment was brought in an *olla podrida*, so delicious, that we pitied the Archbishop of Valencia for having lost the cook that composed it. At every morsel we ate, my new lackeys presented to us large glasses filled to the brims with wine of a most exquisite relish[1]. Scipio, not daring to show before them the interior satisfaction that he felt, expressed himself to me by eloquent looks; and I gave him to understand, by the same language, that I was as well satisfied as he. A dish of roast meat composed of two fat quails, which flanked a leveret of an admirable *fumet*, made us quit the *olla*, and finished our repast. When we had eaten like two gormandizers and drank in proportion, we got up from table and walked into the garden, to enjoy a voluptuous siesta, in some cool agreeable place.

If my secretary seemed hitherto satisfied with what he had seen, he was still more so when he beheld the garden, which he thought comparable even to that of the Escorial. It is true, Don Caesar, who came frequently to Lirias, took pleasure in having it cultivated

[1] *Vin de la Manche exquis* in the original, but for some reason the translator omits the reference to La Mancha.

and embellished: the walks well gravelled, and bordered with orange-trees, a great basin of white marble, in the middle of which, a brazen lion vomited out great gushes of water, the beauty of the flowers, the variety of fruits, all these objects ravished Scipio; but he was in a particular manner enchanted with a long walk that led by a gentle descent all the way to a farmer's house, and was shaded by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. Here we stopped to make the eulogium of a place so proper for an asylum against the heat of the day; and sitting down at the root of a young elm, sleep easily surprised two merry fellows, who had just made such a good dinner.

Two hours after we started up, awakened by the noise of several shot, which seemed so near, that we were frightened. We got up in a hurry, and repaired to the farmer's house, where we found eight or ten peasants, all inhabitants of the hamlet, who had scoured and fired their muskets, to celebrate my arrival, of which they had got notice. The greatest part of them knew me, having seen me more than once, at the castle, in the exercise of my stewardship. They no sooner perceived me, than they cried all together, 'Long life to our new master, who is welcome to Lirias!' Then they loaded their pieces, and regaled me with a general discharge. I received them as courteously as I could; preserving my gravity, however; thinking it improper to be too familiar with them. I assured them of my protection, left twenty pistoles among them; and this, I believe, they did not look upon as the most disagreeable part of my behaviour. I afterwards left them at liberty to spend more powder, and retired with my secretary into the wood, where we strolled about till night, without being tired with beholding the groves; so charming is the first view of a new possession.

The cook, his assistant, and scullion were not idle in the meantime; they were busy in preparing a repast, even superior to that which we had eaten; and we

were actually astonished when, returning into the same hall where we had dined, we saw them place upon the table a dish of roasted partridges, with a jugged rabbit on one side; and on the other, a capon in ragout. The next course of dainties consisted of pig's ears, pickled chicks, and cream chocolate. We drank plentifully of Luceno, and several sorts of excellent wine; and when we found we could drink no more, without exposing our healths, we thought of going to bed. Then my lackeys, taking lights, conducted me to the best apartment, where they were very officious in undressing me: but when they gave me my gown and nightcap, I dismissed them, saying, with a magisterial air, 'Leave me, gentlemen; I have no further occasion for you to-night.'

I sent them all away; and keeping Scipio for a little conversation, asked what he thought of the treatment I received by order of the noblemen of Leyva. 'In faith (answered he), I think you can't be treated better; I only wish that this may last.' 'I entertain no such wish (I replied): it ill becomes me to let my benefactors be at such expense on my account: this were to abuse their generosity: besides, I can't put up with servants who are paid by another; I should not believe myself in my own house. Neither am I come hither to live in a bustle; we have no occasion for such a great number of domestics; we want no more than Bertrand, a cook, a scullion, and lackey.' Although my secretary would not have been sorry to live always at the expense of the Governor of Valencia, he did not oppose my delicacy in this affair; but conforming himself to my sentiments, approved of the reform I intended to make. This being determined, he left me, and retired into his own apartment.

## CHAPTER IV

*He departs for Valencia, to visit the noblemen of Leyva. His conversation with them, and the kind reception he met with from Seraphina*

I UNDRESSED, and went to bed; where, feeling no inclination to sleep, I abandoned myself to reflection. I represented to myself the friendship with which the noblemen of Leyva repaid my attachment to them; and, penetrated with those new marks of their affection, resolved to go, the very next day, and satisfy the longing impatience I had of seeing and thanking them for their favours. I likewise enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasure of seeing Seraphina again; but that pleasure was not pure: I could not, without uneasiness, consider, that I must, at the same time, support the looks of Dame Lorenza Sephora, who, perhaps, remembering the adventure of the box on the ear, would not be overjoyed at sight of me. Fatigued with all these different ideas, I at length fell asleep, and did not wake till after sunrise.

I was soon afoot; and, wholly engrossed by my intended journey, dressed myself in a hurry. Just as I had done adjusting myself, my secretary coming into my chamber, 'Scipio (said I), you see me ready to set out for Valencia; I cannot make too much haste in going to salute the noblemen to whom I owe my small fortune; every moment that I delay to acquit myself of this duty seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for thee, my friend, I dispense with thy attendance; stay here in my absence, and I will come back to thee in eight days.' 'Go, sir (he replied), pay your respects to Don Alphonso and his father, who seem so sensible of your zeal, and grateful for the services you have done them: persons of quality, of that character, are so rare, that they cannot be too much esteemed.' I ordered Bertrand to get ready for our departure; and while he yoked the mules I drank my chocolate: then

I got into my chaise, after having laid injunctions upon my people to regard my secretary as my other self, and to follow his orders as if they were my own.

I arrived in Valencia in less than four hours; and going straight to the Governor's stables, there alighted, left my equipage, and was conducted to the apartment of that nobleman, who was then with his father, Don Caesar. I opened the door, and entering without ceremony, accosted them in these words: 'It does not become valets to send in their names to their masters: here is one of your old servants come to pay his respects.' So saying, I would have kneeled before them; but they hindered me from so doing, and embraced me, one after another, with all the expressions of genuine affection. 'Well, my dear Santillana (said Don Alphonso), have you been at Lirias to take possession of your estate?' 'Yes, señor (I replied), and I hope you will give me leave to restore it.' 'For what reason? (said he). Is there anything disagreeable about it, that gives you disgust?' 'Not in itself (I resumed): on the contrary, I am enchanted with it. All that displeases me in it, is, to see cooks of an Archbishop, with three times more servants than I want; which only serve to put you to an expense equally useless and considerable.'

'If (said Don Caesar) you had accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered at Madrid, we should have been contented with giving you the house furnished as it is; but, you know, you refused the pension; and we thought we could do no less than make you some other recompense.' 'This is too much (I replied): your generosity ought to have been confined to the present of the estate, which is enough to crown my wishes. But, exclusive of your cost in maintaining so many people, at a great expense, I declare that these people incommode and plague me. In a word, my lords, take back your estate, or allow me to enjoy it, according to my own desire.' I pronounced these last words with such a determined air, that the father and son, who did not at all intend

to lay me under any constraint, promised, at length, that I should live as I pleased in my own house.

I thanked them for having granted me that liberty, without which I could not be happy; when Don Alphonso interrupted me, saying, 'My dear Gil Blas, I will introduce you to a lady who will be overjoyed to see you.' With these words, he took me by the hand, and led me into the apartment of Seraphina, who gave an exclamation of joy when she saw me. 'Madam (said the Governor), I believe the arrival of our friend Santillana at Valencia is as agreeable to you as to me.' 'That is what he ought to be convinced of (answered she): time has not made me lose the remembrance of the service he did me; and to the gratitude I myself owe him, I add that which I ought to have on your account.' I told the lady governess, that I was but too well requited for the danger I had shared with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her sake. And, after many mutual compliments, Don Alphonso brought me back from Seraphina's apartment; and we rejoined Don Caesar, whom we found in a hall with several persons of quality, who came there to dinner.

All these gentlemen saluted me with great politeness; and were the more civil to me, because Don Caesar had told them, that I was once one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. Perhaps, likewise, the greatest part of them knew it was by my credit that Don Alphonso had obtained the Government of Valencia; for everything is known. Be that as it will, when we were at table, the new Cardinal[1] was the whole subject of the discourse. Some gave, or affected to give, him great commendations; while others seasoned their praise with some severe sneers.

From hence I concluded, that they wanted I should enlarge upon his Eminence, and make them merry at his expense. I had some inclination to disclose my sentiments of him; but I restrained my tongue: and this silence made me pass, in the opinion of the company, for a man of great discretion.

[1] Lerma: see Book X, Chapter i, p. 208, *n.*

After dinner, the guests retired to take their siestas at their own homes: Don Caesar and his son, seized with the same desire, shut themselves up in their apartments: and I, impatient to see a city, the beauty of which I had heard so much extolled, went out of the Governor's palace, with a design to stroll through the streets. At the gate, I met a man, who accosted me in these words: 'Señor de Santillana, give me leave to salute you.' When I asked who he was, 'I am now (said he), Don Caesar's valet de chambre: but was one of his lackeys, while you were his steward: I made my court to you every morning, because you were very kind to me; and I informed you of everything that happened in the house. Don't you remember that I one day gave you notice, that the surgeon of the village of Leyva was privately admitted into the chamber of Dame Lorenza Sephora?' 'I have not forgot it (I replied): but *à propos*, what is become of that duenna?' 'Alas! (said he) after your departure, the poor creature pined away, and died, more regretted by Seraphina than by Don Alphonso, who seemed very little afflicted at her death.'

Don Caesar's valet de chambre, having thus informed me of Sephora's melancholy end, made an apology for having stopped me; and I continued my walk, sighing at the remembrance of that unfortunate duenna, and lamenting her fate, which I imputed to myself; without considering, that it was more owing to her own cancer than to my cruelty.

I observed, with pleasure, all that was worth seeing in this city; the marble palace of the Archbishop agreeably entertained my view, as well as the fine porticoes of the Exchange; but a large house, which I discerned at a distance, and which I saw a great number of people enter, attracted my attention. I approached it, in order to know the reason of such a great concourse of men and women; and was soon satisfied, when I read these words, written in golden letters, on a stone of black marble placed over the gate, *La posada de*

*los representantes*[1]. And the players advertised in their bill, that they would that day, for the first time, act a new tragedy, composed by Don Gabriel Triaquero[2].

## CHAPTER V

*Gil Blas goes to the play, where he sees a new tragedy acted. The success of that performance, with the public taste of Valencia*

I STOPPED some minutes at the door, to view the people who went in; and observed that they consisted of all ranks. I saw cavaliers of a genteel mien, and richly dressed, and some figures as ordinary as the clothes they wore. I perceived ladies of quality alight from their coaches, and go to the boxes, which they had ordered to be bespoke; and female adventurers go in with a view of alluring cullies. This concourse of all sorts of spectators made me desirous of increasing the number. Just as I was going to take a ticket, the Governor and his lady arriving, discerned me in the crowd; and ordering me to be called, carried me into their box, where I placed myself behind them, so as to be able to speak to both with ease. I found the house full of people from top to bottom, the pit very much thronged, and the stage packed with knights of the three military orders. 'Here is (said I to Don Alphonso) a very numerous assembly.' 'You must not be surprised at that (answered he): the tragedy to be represented is the composition of Don Gabriel Triaquero, surnamed the modish poet[3]. As soon as the play-bills advertise a new thing, written by that

[1] *I.e.*, the play-house.

[2] A vendor of theriaca (θηριακή), an electuary, so called because it was believed to be a specific against poison and snake-bites.

[3] Triaquero is thought to be a caricature of Voltaire who had recently delighted Paris with *Zaire* (1732) and *Adélaïde du Guesclin* (1734).

author, the whole city of Valencia is in a flutter; the men, as well as the women, talk of nothing but this piece; all the boxes are bespoke: and it being the first day of its representation, people are squeezed to death, endeavouring to enter; although the price of every place is doubled, except the pit, which they dare not disoblige.' 'Such excitement! (said I to the Governor) this eager curiosity of the public, this furious impatience to see every new production of Gabriel, gives me a high idea of the poet's genius.'

In this part of our conversation, the actors appeared; and we left off speaking immediately, in order to listen with attention. The applauses began with the prologue; every verse was attended with a *brouhaha*, and at the end of each act, there was such a clapping of hands, that one would have thought the house was falling. After the performance, they showed me the author, who went from box to box, modestly presenting his head for the laurels with which the gentlemen and ladies prepared to crown him.

We returned to the Governor's palace, where three or four knights arrived in a little time: thither also came two old authors esteemed in their way, with a gentleman from Madrid, of understanding and taste. As they had all been at the play, the whole conversation at supper turned upon the new piece. 'Gentlemen (said a knight of Santiago), what is your opinion of this tragedy? Is it not what you call a finished work? Sublime thoughts, tender sentiments, manly versification, deficient in nothing: in a word, it is a poem adapted to people of taste.' 'I believe nobody can be of a contrary opinion (said the knight of Alcántara): the piece is full of strokes that Apollo seems to have dictated, and of situations conceived with infinite art. I appeal to this gentleman (added he, addressing himself to the Castilian), he seems to be a connoisseur; and I'll wager he is of my sentiment.' 'Don't wager, chevalier (answered the gentleman, with a sarcastic smile), we do not decide so hastily at Madrid: far from judging a piece at its first repre-

sentation, we distrust its beauties while they are in the mouths of the actors: and how well soever we may be affected to the author, suspend our judgement, until we have read it: and, truly, it does not always give us the same pleasure upon paper, that we received from it on the stage. We scrupulously examine a poem before we esteem it, without being dazzled by the author's reputation, how great soever it may be. When Lope de Vega[1] himself, and Calderon[2], produced new pieces, they found in their admirers severe judges, who would not raise them to the highest point of glory, until they judged them worthy of that elevation.'

'Zooks! (cried the knight of Santiago) we are not so fearful as you: we don't wait until a piece is printed, but on the first representation fix its value: there is not even occasion for our listening to it with great attention; if we know it to be a production of Don Gabriel, that is enough to convince us that it is without blemish. The works of that poet ought to serve as an epoch for the birth of taste: your Lopes and Calderons were but apprentices in comparison with this great master of the stage.' The gentleman who looked upon Lope and Calderon as the Spanish Sophocles and Euripides, was shocked at this rash assertion. 'Such dramatic sacrilege! (cried he). Since you oblige me, gentlemen, to judge, like you, from a first representation, I must tell you, that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel: it is stuffed with strokes more shining than solid; three parts in four of the verse are bad, or misrhymed; the characters ill-conceived, and ill-supported; and the sentiments very often obscure.'

[1] See Book VII, Chapter xiii, p. 71, *n*.

[2] Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600-1680), one of the greatest Spanish dramatists, succeeded Lope de Vega in the supremacy of the stage. It may be noted that the above conversation is supposed to take place shortly after Lerma's elevation to the Cardinalate: at this time Calderon was a boy of eighteen, not yet known to fame.

The two authors, who were at table, and who, through a reserve as commendable as rare, had said nothing, for fear of being suspected of jealousy, could not help applauding the gentleman's sentiments with their eyes; which made me guess, that their silence was not so much owing to the perfection of the work, as to other prudential reasons. As for the knights, they began again to praise Don Gabriel, whom they even placed among the gods. This extravagant apotheosis, and blind idolatry, made the Castilian lose all patience: he lifted up his hands to heaven, and all of a sudden exclaimed, in a fit of enthusiasm, 'O divine Lope de Vega! rare and sublime genius, who hast left an immense space between thee, and all the Gabriels who attempt to reach thy excellence; and you, mellifluous Calderon! whose elegant softness, purged of epic stiffness, is inimitable[1]; do not fear that your altars will be demolished by this new pupil of the Muses, who will be very lucky, if posterity, which you will delight, as you delight the present age, shall hear his name mentioned!'

This pleasant apostrophe, which nobody expected, raised the laugh of the whole company, which got up from table, and parted. I was conducted, by Don Alphonso's order, into an apartment prepared for me: there I found a good bed, in which my lordship went to sleep, deploring (like the Castilian gentleman) the injustice which ignorant people did to Lope and Calderon.

[1] Lope and Calderon are here intended, it is said, for Corneille and Racine respectively, and the description of Calderon certainly applies rather to the French than to the Spanish poet.

## CHAPTER VI

*Gil Blas walking through the streets of Valencia meets a friar whom he thinks he knows. An account of that friar*

As I had not seen the whole city in my first excursion, I went out next day, with an intention to take another walk; and perceived in the street a Carthusian friar, who, doubtless, was going to perform the affairs of his community. He walked with downcast eyes, and so devout an air, that he attracted the notice of everybody. As he passed close by me, I looked at him with attention, and thought I saw in him the very person of Don Raphael, that adventurer who maintains such an honourable place in the two first volumes of my memoirs[1].

I was so much astonished, so struck with this meeting, that, instead of accosting the monk, I stood immovable some minutes; during which, he was gone a good way from me. 'Just heaven! (said I) were ever two faces more alike? What must I think of this affair? Can it be Raphael indeed? or can I doubt that it is he?' I was too curious to know the truth, to remain long where I was. I asked the way to the monastery of the Carthusians, whither I instantly repaired, in hopes of seeing my man again, when he should return; and firmly resolved to stop, and speak to him. I had no occasion to wait for this: when I came to the gate of the convent, another face of my acquaintance turned my doubts into certainty: I recollected in the porter my old valet, Ambrose de Lamela.

We were equally surprised to find one another in that place. 'Don't I dream? (said I, saluting him) is it actually one of my friends whom I behold?'

[1] The first two volumes of *Gil Blas*, published in 1715, contain Books I-VI: Raphael appears in all, except Book III.

He could not recall me at first, or feigned himself ignorant of my features; but, considering that this feint was useless, he affected the air of a person who remembers a thing all of a sudden: 'Ah! Señor Gil Blas! (cried he) forgive my want of memory. Since I have lived in this holy place, and applied myself to fulfil the duties prescribed by our rules, I lose insensibly the remembrance of what I have seen in the world.'

'I am sincerely rejoiced (said I) to see you, after an absence of ten years, in such a reverend dress.' 'And I (he replied) am ashamed to appear in it, before a person who has been witness of the guilty life I led. This dress incessantly upbraids me. Alas! (added he, sighing profoundly) to be worthy of wearing it, I ought to have lived always in innocence.' 'By this discourse, with which I am charmed (I resumed), my dear brother, one may see that you have been touched by the finger of the Lord. I repeat the assurance of my joy at the occasion; and long earnestly to hear in what miraculous manner you and Don Raphael have entered into the right way; for I am persuaded that it was he whom I just now met in the Carthusian habit. I am sorry that I did not stop him in the street, and speak to him; and I wait here for his return, in order to repair my neglect.'

'You are not mistaken (said Lamela to me); it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw: and as to the detail you desire, here it is. After we parted from you, near Segorba, the son of Lucinda and I took the road to Valencia, with a design of playing some new trick of our profession in that city. One day, by accident, we went into the church of the Carthusians, while the monks were singing psalms in the choir. We considered them attentively, and experienced that even the wicked cannot help honouring virtue. We admired the fervour with which they prayed to God, their mortified air, their minds detached from the pleasures of the age, as well as the serenity that reigned in their countenances, and so well expressed the repose of their consciences.

'While we made these observations, we fell into a reverie, that became very salutary unto us. We compared our morals with those of the good monks, and the difference which we found filled us with sorrow and disquiet. "Lamela (said Don Raphael to me, when we came out of the church), how art thou affected with what we have seen? For my part, I cannot conceal from thee the anxiety of my mind. I am agitated by emotions hitherto unknown to me, and for the first time of my life my conscience upbraids me with my iniquity." "I am in the selfsame disposition (answered I). The evil actions which I have committed, at this instant rise up against me, and my heart, which was before hardened against repentance, is now torn with remorse." "Ah! dear Ambrose! (resumed my comrade) we are two strayed sheep, whom the Heavenly Father, through pity, intends to bring back into the fold. It is He, my child, it is He, who calls us. Let us not be deaf to His voice. Let us renounce cheating, quit the libertinism in which we live, and begin from this very day to labour seriously in the great work of our salvation. We must spend the rest of our days in this convent, and consecrate them to piety and penitence."

'I applauded Raphael's sentiment (continued Brother Ambrose), and we formed the generous resolution of becoming Carthusians. To put this in execution, we addressed ourselves to the Father Prior, who no sooner understood our design, than, in order to prove our vocation, he accommodated us with cells, and we were treated like monks during a whole year. We followed the rules with such exactness and constancy, that we were received among the novices. We were so well satisfied with our situation, and so full of ardour, that we courageously underwent the toils of the noviciate; we then professed: after which, Don Raphael appearing endued with a genius for business, was chosen assistant to an old father, who was at that time procurator. The son of Lucinda would have rather spent his whole time in prayer, but he

was obliged to sacrifice his inclination to the good of the convent. He acquired such a perfect knowledge of the interests of the house, that he was deemed capable of filling the place of the old procurator, who died three years after. Don Raphael actually exercises that employment at present, and acquits himself in it, to the great satisfaction of all our fathers, who praise his conduct very much, in the administration of our temporalities. What is very surprising is, that in spite of the care of collecting our revenues, with which he is invested, he seems engrossed by eternity alone. And when his business leaves him a moment to himself, he employs it in the most profound meditation. In a word, he is one of the holiest monks in our monastery.'

In this place I interrupted Lamela, with a transport of joy, that I expressed at the sight of Raphael, who arrived. 'There (cried I), there is the holy solicitor for whom I waited so impatiently.' At the same time I ran up and embraced him. He received my salutation with a good grace; and, without discovering the least surprise at meeting, said to me, with a voice full of sweetness, 'God be praised, Señor de Santillana, God be praised for the pleasure I have in seeing you.' 'Truly (I replied), my dear Raphael, I share as much as possible in your happiness. Brother Ambrose has recounted to me the history of your conversion, and I was charmed with the narration. What advantage have you both, my friends, in being able to flatter yourselves, that you are of the small number of the elect, who will one day enjoy eternal felicity!'

'Two wretches such as we are (resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air of great humility), ought not to conceive such hopes; but the repentance of sinners makes them find favour with the Father of mercy. And you, Señor Gil Blas (added he), don't you also think of deserving pardon for the crimes you have committed? What business brings you to Valencia? Don't you unhappily fill some dangerous employment in this place?' 'No, thank God (I replied), since I

quitted the court, I have led the life of an honest man. Sometimes at an estate which I have some leagues from hence, I enjoy the pleasures of the country; and sometimes I come to make merry with the Governor of Valencia, who is my friend, and one whom you both know perfectly well.'

Then I recounted the history of Don Alphonso de Leyva, to which they listened with attention; and when I told them, I had carried from that nobleman to Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had stolen from him, Lamela interrupted me, and addressing himself to Raphael, 'Father Hilary (said he), at that rate, the merchant has no cause to complain of a robbery, for which he has received restitution with usury, and we ought to have quiet consciences on that article.' 'Really (said the procurator), Brother Ambrose and I, before we entered this convent, sent privately fifteen hundred ducats to Samuel Simon, by a worthy clergyman, who took the trouble of going to Xelva, in order to make that restitution: so much the worse for Samuel, if he was capable of touching that sum, having been reimbursed of the whole by Señor de Santillana.' 'But (said I to them) are you sure that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully remitted to him?' 'Questionless (cried Don Raphael), I will answer for the clergyman's integrity, as much as for my own.' 'And I will join in the security (said Lamela). He is a holy priest, used to these sorts of commissions, and has had, for things deposited in his hands, two or three law-suits, which he gained with costs.'

Our conversation lasted some time longer; then we parted, they exhorting me to have always the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and I recommending myself to their devout prayers. Going straight to Don Alphonso, 'You can't guess (said I to him) with whom I have had a long conversation. I have just parted with two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance, one called Father Hilary, and the other Brother Ambrose.' 'You are mistaken (answered Don Al-

phonso), I know not one Carthusian.' 'Pardon me (I replied), you saw at Xelva Brother Ambrose, Commissary, and Father Hilary, Secretary, to the Inquisition.' 'Good heaven! (cried the Governor with surprise) is it possible that Raphael and Lamela are become Carthusians?' 'Yes, indeed (said I), they have been professed monks some years. The first is procurator, and the other porter of the convent.'

Don Caesar's son mused some minutes, then shaking his head, 'Mr. Commissary of the Inquisition, and his secretary (said he) are, in my opinion, bent upon playing some new farce here.' 'You are prejudiced against them (answered I). For my own part, having conversed with them, I judge more favourably of their intention. It is true, we cannot dive into the heart; but, to all appearance, they are two converted sinners.' 'That may be (resumed Don Alphonso); there have been many libertines, who, after having scandalized the world by their irregularities, shut themselves up in cloisters, to perform a rigorous penitence, and I wish our two monks may be of that sort.' 'Why should they not? (said I) they have voluntarily embraced a monastic life, and have already lived a long time like good friars.' 'You may say what you please (said the Governor). I don't like that the convent's cash should be in the hands of that same Father Hilary, whose integrity I cannot help distrusting. When I remember that fine detail he gave us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I would willingly believe with you, that he has taken the habit from a very pious motive, but the sight of the cash may awaken his cupidity. A reformed drunkard should never be left in a cellar.'

The suspicion of Don Alphonso was fully justified in a few days. Father Procurator and Brother Porter disappeared with the cash. This piece of news, which was immediately spread all over the city, afforded great mirth to the wits, who always rejoice at the misfortunes which happen to endowed monks.

As for the Governor and me, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our acquaintance with the two apostates.

## CHAPTER VII

*Gil Blas returns to his castle of Lirias. Hears an agreeable piece of news from Scipio. And makes a reform in his housekeeping*

I SPENT eight days at Valencia in high state, living among counts and marquesses. Shows, balls, concerts, entertainments, conversations with the ladies, and other amusements, I enjoyed by the favour of the Governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so successfully, that when I set out for Lirias, they were sorry to part with me. They even obliged me to promise that I would divide my time between them and my solitude; and it was agreed that I should live at Valencia in the winter, and spend the summer at my own house. This convention being made, my benefactors gave me liberty to go and enjoy their favours.

Scipio, who impatiently expected my return, was overjoyed at seeing me; and I redoubled his pleasure by a faithful report of my journey. 'Well, my friend (said I to him afterwards), how didst thou spend the day in my absence? Didst thou divert thyself agreeably?' 'As well (answered he) as a servant could, to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked all over our small territories. Sometimes seated on the brink of that fountain which is in our wood, I took pleasure in contemplating the beauty of its waters, which are as pure as those of the sacred fountain, that makes the vast forest of Albuena echo with its noise[1]. And sometimes, stretched at the root of a tree, heard the linnets and the nightingales tune their song. In short, I have hunted, I have

[1] Cf. Horace, *Odes*, I, vii.

fished; and what gave me more satisfaction than all other amusements, I have read several books as useful as entertaining.'

I interrupted my secretary with precipitation, to ask where he found these books. 'I found them (said he) in a handsome library which Mr. Joachim showed me in this castle.' 'Ha! in what part (said I) can this pretended library be? Did we not visit the whole house on the first day of our arrival?' 'So you imagined (answered he); but you must know, we surveyed three pavilions only, and forgot the fourth, where Don Caesar, when he came to Lirias, usually employed a part of his time in reading. There are in this library exceeding good books left for you, as an assured entertainment, when our gardens, stripped of their flowers, and our woods of their leaves, shall have nothing left to amuse us. The noblemen of Leyva have not done things by halves, but provided food for the mind, as well as for the body.'

Truly rejoiced at this piece of news, I followed him into the fourth pavilion, which presented a very agreeable scene to my view. I beheld a chamber, which from that hour I destined to be my apartment, as it had been Don Caesar's. The bed of that nobleman was still there, together with all the rest of the furniture: that is, a tapestry with figures, representing the rape of the Sabine women. From this room, I went into a closet, surrounded with low presses filled with books, over which appeared the portraits of all our Kings. There was also hard by a window, from whence we had a view of a most delightful country, and an ebony bureau standing before a large sofa covered with black morocco. But I bestowed my chief attention upon the library, which was composed of philosophy, poetry, history, and a great number of romances on the subject of knight-errantry. I concluded that Don Caesar loved this last kind of writing, since he had made such plentiful provision of it. I must confess, to my shame, that I was no less pleased with these productions, notwithstanding all the extrava-

gances with which they are interwoven; whether it was owing to my being at that time no very considerate reader, or that Spaniards in general are too much captivated by the marvellous. I will say, nevertheless, that I took more pleasure in sprightly books of morality, and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus became my favourite authors.

'Friend (said I to Scipio, when I had surveyed my library), here is amusement indeed; but our present business is to retrench our housekeeping.' 'I will spare you that task (answered he). During your absence, I have studied your people, and now may boast of knowing them perfectly well. Let us begin with Mr. Joachim, who (I believe) is a complete rogue, and I don't doubt that he was turned out of the Archbishop's service for having committed arithmetical blunders in his accounts. Nevertheless, we must keep him for two reasons: the first is, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him: I will be a spy upon his actions, and he must be as cunning as the devil if he is able to deceive me. I have already told him that you intend to dismiss three-fourths of your servants: a piece of news that gave him some pain; and he assured me that, feeling an inclination to serve you, he would, rather than leave the house, be contented with the half of his present wages; a circumstance, which makes me suspect that there is some girl in the village from whom he would not willingly remove. As for the cook's assistant (added he), he is a drunkard, and the porter an insolent fellow, for whom we have not the least occasion, no more than for the fowler; I can easily fill up the place of this last, as I will show you to-morrow, since we have plenty of guns, powder and shot. With regard to the lackeys, there is one of them from Aragon, seemingly a good lad, him we will keep; the rest are such rogues, that I would not advise you to detain them, even if you wanted a hundred valets.'

Having maturely deliberated on this affair, we re-

solved to keep the cook, scullion, Aragonian footman, and rid ourselves honourably of the rest. This was executed that very day, by means of some pistoles, which Scipio took from our strong box, and divided among them by my order. When we had made this reformation, we established a certain order in the house, regulated the office of each domestic, and began to live at our own expense. I would have been contented with a frugal ordinary; but my secretary, who loved ragouts and dainties, was not the man to leave Mr. Joachim's skill unemployed. He kept him so well at work, that our dinners and suppers might have served a company of Bernardine monks.

## CHAPTER VIII

*The amours of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia*

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basil the farmer, my tenant, came in the morning to ask leave to present Antonia, his daughter, who (he said) wanted to have the honour of saluting her new master. I told him that it would give me great pleasure; upon which he went out, and returned soon after with the fair Antonia. I think I may give that epithet to a maid of sixteen or eighteen years, who, with the most regular features, possessed the fairest complexion and finest eyes in the world. Though she was clad in a stuff gown, her rich air, majestic port and graces, that do not always accompany youth, dignified the simplicity of her dress. She wore no cap on her head, her hair being tied up behind with a knot of flowers, in the manner of the Lacedaemonian women. When she entered my chamber, I was as much struck with her beauty as the knights of Charlemagne's court with the charms of Angelica[1]. Instead of receiving Antonia with ease, and saying kind things to her; instead of congratulating the father on his

[1] Cf. Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato*, I, i, 21-23.

happiness in having such a charming daughter, I stood confounded, astonished and mute. Scipio, who perceived my disorder, spoke in my room, and was at the expense of those praises which I owed to that lovely creature. As for her part, not at all dazzled by my figure, in my morning gown and cap, she saluted me without any concern, and made me a compliment, which, though commonplace, enchanted my affection. In the meantime, while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter were employed in mutual civilities, I recollected myself; and to make amends for the stupid silence I had hitherto kept, passed from one extremity to another, launched out into gallant discourse, and spoke with so much vivacity, that I alarmed Basil, who, looking upon me already as a man who would put everything in practice to seduce Antonia, went out of my apartment with her in a hurry, resolved perhaps to withdraw her from my eyes for ever.

Scipio, seeing himself alone with me, said with a smile, 'Here is another resource against the tedious hours. I did not know that your farmer had such a handsome daughter, having never before seen her, though I have been twice at her father's house: he must be at great pains to conceal her; and I commend his care. Egad, she's a delicate morsel! But (added he) I believe I need not say so to you, who were dazzled by her at first sight.' 'I don't deny it (answered I). Ah, my child! I thought I saw a celestial substance. She inflamed me all of a sudden, and pierced my heart with an arrow swift as lightning.'

'I am ravished (replied my secretary) to learn that you are at last in love. You wanted a mistress to make you enjoy perfect happiness in your solitude. Thank heaven you have now all sorts of conveniences. I know (continued he) that we shall have some difficulty in deceiving the vigilance of Basil; but leave that to me: I undertake in three days to procure for you a private interview with Antonia.' 'Mr. Scipio (said I), perhaps you might not be able to keep your promise; but that is not what I am curious to try.

I have no intention to tempt the virtue of that girl, who seems to deserve that I should entertain other sentiments of her. Wherefore, far from exacting of your zeal, that you should assist me in dishonouring her, I am resolved, by your mediation, to espouse her, provided her heart is not engaged to another.' 'I did not expect (said he) to see you take such a sudden resolution to marry. Many country gentlemen in your place would not deal so honourably; they would never entertain legitimate views with regard to Antonia, until they had tried others to no purpose. But however (added he), don't imagine that I condemn your love, and seek to dissuade you from your design. Your tenant's daughter deserves the honour you intend for her, if she can bestow upon you a heart unengaged, and sensible of your generosity. This I must inform myself of to-day, in a conversation with the father, and perhaps with herself.'

My confidant, who was a punctual man in performing his promises, went privately to visit Basil, and in the evening came to me in my closet, where I waited with impatience, mingled with fear. Drawing a good omen from his cheerful look, 'If I may believe (said I) that smile on thy face, thou comest to signify that I shall soon enjoy my wish.' 'Yes, my dear master (he replied), everything is propitious to you. I have had a conversation with Basil and his daughter, to whom I declared your intention. The father is overjoyed to hear you design to be his son-in-law; and I can assure you that you are very much to Antonia's taste.' 'O heaven! (cried I, in a transport of joy) what! am I so happy as to be agreeable to that lovely creature?' 'Doubtless (he resumed). She already loves you. I have not indeed drawn that confession from her mouth; but I am convinced of her passion by the gaiety she discovered when she understood your design. Nevertheless (added he), you have a rival.' 'A rival!' (cried I, changing colour). 'You need not be much alarmed (said he), that rival will not rob you of the heart of your mistress, he is no other

than Mr. Joachim, your cook.' 'Ah! the hang-dog! (said I, bursting into a fit of laughing) this was his reason for showing such reluctance to quit my service.' 'The very same (answered Scipio). He some days ago demanded Antonia in marriage, and met with a polite refusal.' 'With deference to thy better advice (I resumed), methinks it will be proper to rid ourselves of the rogue, before he can get notice that I intend to marry Basil's daughter; a cook, thou knowest, is a dangerous rival.' 'You are in the right (replied my confidant), we must clear the house of him. I will give him his dismissal to-morrow morning before he begins to work, and then you shall have nothing to fear either from his sauces or his love. I am sorry, however, to lose such an excellent cook, but I sacrifice my palate to your safety.' 'Thou needest not regret him so much (said I), the loss is not irreparable; I will send to Valencia for a cook as good as he.' And indeed I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, that I had occasion for a cook, and the very next day he sent one who consoled Scipio at once.

Although the zealous secretary had told me that he perceived Antonia was pleased in her heart with the conquest which she had made of her master, I durst not depend upon his report, being apprehensive that he might have been deceived by false appearances. To be more sure of the matter, I resolved to speak in person to the fair Antonia; and repairing to Basil's house, confirmed what my ambassador had told him. That honest farmer, a man of frankness and simplicity, having heard my design, assured me, that he would bestow his daughter upon me, with the utmost satisfaction; but (added he) don't think that it is on account of your being lord of the manor. Were you still no more than the steward of Don Caesar and Don Alphonso, I would prefer you to all the other suitors who present themselves. I have always had a regard for you; and what gives me the most concern is, that Antonia cannot bring you a large fortune.' 'I ask nothing with her (said I), her person is all the wealth

to which I aspire.' 'Your most humble servant! (cried he). That is not my intention: I am not such a beggar, as to marry my daughter in that manner. Basil de Buenotrigo[1] is in a condition, thank God, to give her a dowry; and for every dinner you bestow upon her, she shall afford a supper to you. In a word, the rent of your estate, which is but five hundred ducats, shall amount to a thousand, by virtue of this marriage.'

'You shall do in that as you please, my dear Basil (I replied), we shall have no disputes about interest; and now that we are agreed, the sole business is to obtain the consent of your daughter.' 'You have mine (said he), and that is enough.' 'Not altogether (answered I), if yours is necessary, hers is so too.' 'Hers depends upon me (said he). I would fain see her refuse.' 'Antonia (I resumed), submissive to paternal authority, is ready, without doubt, to obey you implicitly; but I don't know if she can do it upon this occasion, without reluctance: and if she can't, I should never be consoled for having made her unhappy; in short, it is not enough for me to obtain her hand of you, unless her heart goes to the bargain.' 'By'r lady! (said Basil) I don't understand all this philosophy: speak, yourself, to Antonia, and you shall see, if I am not mistaken, that she desires no better than to be your wife.' So saying, he called his daughter and left me alone with her for a minute or two.

That I might enjoy the precious opportunity, I came to the point at once. 'Fair Antonia (said I), determine my fate. Although I have your father's consent, don't think that I intend to avail myself of it, in doing violence to your inclination. Charming as it is, I renounce the possession of you, if you say that I must owe it to your obedience only.' 'That is what I will not say (answered she), your addresses are too agreeable to give me pain; and, instead of murmuring, I approve of my father's choice. I don't know (continued she) whether I do well or ill in talking

[1] *Bueno trigo*=good wheat.

thus; but if you were disagreeable to me, I should be frank enough to own it; why, then, may I not say the contrary with the same freedom?'

At these words, which I could not hear without being charmed, I kneeled before Antonia, and, in the excess of my joy, seizing one of her fair hands, kissed it with the utmost tenderness and passion. 'My dear Antonia (said I), I am enchanted with your frankness; continue the same unconstrained behaviour; and as you speak to your husband, disclose your whole soul to his view. May I, then, flatter myself, that you will be pleased to see your fortune joined to mine?' Basil coming in at that instant, hindered me from proceeding. Impatient to know his daughter's answer, and ready to grumble, had she shown the least aversion for me, 'Well (said he), are you satisfied with Antonia?' 'I am so well satisfied with her (answered I), that I will, this very moment, go and make preparations for my marriage.' So saying, I took my leave of the father and daughter, to go and consult with my secretary on that subject.

## CHAPTER IX

*The manner in which the nuptials of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia were celebrated; and the rejoicings with which they were attended*

Although I was under no necessity of obtaining the permission of the noblemen of Leyva, Scipio and I concluded that we could not, in honour, omit imparting to them my design of marrying Basil's daughter, and asking their consent, out of good manners.

I set out immediately for Valencia, where they were as much surprised to see me, as to hear the cause of my journey. Don Caesar and his son having seen Antonia more than once, congratulated me on my choice. Don Caesar, especially, complimented me upon it, with such vivacity, that if I had not believed

him to be a man quite weaned from certain amusements, I should have suspected that he had gone sometimes to Lirias, to see his farmer's daughter, rather than to visit his own house. Seraphina, after having assured me, that she would always bear a large part in what should concern me, said she had heard a very good character of Antonia; but (added she, with a satirical look, as if she reproached me for the indifference with which I repaid Sephora's passion), if I had not heard her beauty extolled, I should depend upon your taste, the delicacy of which I know.'

Don Caesar and his son not only approved of my marriage, but declared that they would defray the whole expense of it. 'Go back to Lirias (said they), and make yourself easy, until you hear from us. Make no preparations for your nuptials, but leave that to our care.' In compliance with their desire, I returned to my house, and making Basil and his daughter acquainted with the intention of our patrons, we waited their orders as patiently as we could. During eight days, however, we received none: but, to make amends, on the ninth, a coach and four arrived, full of manteau-makers, and rich stuffs for the bride's clothes, and escorted by several men in livery, mounted on mules. One of them brought a letter for me from Don Alphonso, importing, that he would be at Lirias next day, with his father and spouse, and that the ceremony of my marriage should be celebrated on the day following, by the Vicar-General of Valencia. Accordingly, Don Caesar, his son, and Seraphina, did not fail to come with that clergyman, all four together, in a coach and six, preceded by another drawn by four, in which were Seraphina's women, and attended by the Governor's guards.

My lady governess was scarce arrived, when she expressed the utmost impatience to see Antonia, who, on her part, no sooner understood that Seraphina was alighted, than she ran to salute her, and kissed her hand with such a good grace, that all the company admired her politeness. 'Well, madam (said Don

Caesar to his daughter-in-law), what do you think of Antonia? could Santillana have made a better choice?' 'No, indeed (replied Seraphina), they are worthy of each other, and I don't doubt that their union will be perfectly happy.' In short, every one praised the bride: and if she was much applauded in her country garb, everybody was charmed with her when she appeared in a richer dress. Her air was so noble, and her deportment so easy, that one would have thought she had never worn any other.

The moment being arrived, in which propitious Hymen was to join my fate to hers, Don Alphonso taking me by the hand, led me to the altar, while Seraphina did the same honour to the bride. In this order, we repaired to the village chapel, where the Vicar intended to marry us; and that ceremony was performed amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and all the rich farmers in the neighbourhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding, with their daughters dressed in ribbons and flowers, holding tabors in their hands. We then returned to my house, where, by the care of Scipio, who was contriver of the feast, we found three tables covered, one for the noblemen, another for their attendants, and the third, which was the largest, for the rest of the guests. Antonia sat at the first, by the desire of the lady governess; I did the honours of the second, and Basil took care of the third. As for Scipio, he did not sit, but went from one table to another, employing himself in serving and satisfying every individual.

As the entertainment was prepared by the Governor's cooks, it could not fail of being complete in all its parts. The good wines, of which Mr. Joachim had made ample provision, were drank with profusion; the guests began to wax warm, and mirth and jollity reigned, when we were, all of a sudden, interrupted by an incident that alarmed me. My secretary being in the hall, where I sat at table with the principal officers of Don Alphonso, and Seraphina's women, fell down upon the floor, without sense or motion. I

ran to his assistance, and while I was busied in bringing him to himself again, one of the women fainted away. All the company concluded that there must be some mystery in this double swooning, as it actually concealed one, which, in a little time, was explained ; for, soon after Scipio recovered his spirits, and said to me, softly, 'Why should the happiest of your days be the most disagreeable of mine ? It is impossible for one to shun his destiny (added he) : I have found my wife in the person of one of Seraphina's maids.'

'What do I hear ? (cried I) that is not possible ! What ! art thou the husband of the lady, who was taken ill at the same time with thee ?' 'Yes, sir (he replied), I am her husband ; and fortune, I swear, could not play me a more villainous trick than that of bringing her to my view.' 'I don't know, my friend (said I), what reason thou hast to complain of thy wife ; but, whatever cause she may have given thee, pray constrain thyself ; if thou lovest me, do not disturb this entertainment by showing thy resentment.' 'You shall be satisfied with my behaviour (replied Scipio), and see whether or not I can dissemble.'

So saying, he went up to his wife, who, by the assistance of her companions, was also recovered, and embracing her with the appearance of as much passion, as if he had been ravished to see her again : 'Ah ! my dear Beatrice (said he), heaven unites us again, after ten years of separation ! O happy moment for me !' 'I don't know (answered his wife) whether or not you really feel any joy in meeting me here ; but this I am certain of, I gave you no just cause to leave me. What ! you found me, one night, with Señor Don Fernando de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I assisted ; and you took it in your head, that I listened to him, at the expense of your and my honour : thereupon, jealousy turned your brain ; you quitted Toledo, and fled from me as from a monster, without deigning to come to an explanation ! Which of us two, if you please, has the most right to complain ?' 'You, to be sure (replied Scipio).' 'Yes,

doubtless (said she). Don Fernando, soon after your departure from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I stayed, as long as she lived; and since we were robbed of her, by an untimely death, I have been in the service of my lady her sister, who, as well as her women, can answer for the purity of my morals.'

My secretary, at this discourse, the falsity of which he could not prove, behaved as became him. 'Once more (said he to his wife) I own my fault, and ask pardon before this honourable assembly.' Then I, interceding for him, begged that Beatrice would forget what was past; assuring her, that, for the future, her husband's sole study should be to give her satisfaction. She yielded to my entreaty, and the whole company applauded their reunion; for the better celebration of which, they were made to sit by one another. Their health was toasted; everybody complimented them, and the feast seemed to have been made rather on account of their reconciliation, than of my nuptials.

The third table was first forsaken. The young peasants got up to dance with the country maids, who, by the noise of their tabors, soon brought the company from the other rooms, and inspired them with the desire of following their example. Everybody was now in motion: the Governor's officers began to dance with the attendants of my lady governess; the noblemen themselves mingled in the diversion. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Seraphina. Don Caesar performed with Antonia, who came afterwards and took me out, acquitting herself pretty well, considering that she had only received a few lessons in the house of a relation, who was the wife of a citizen of Albarazin. As for me, who had learned in the house of the Marchioness de Chaves, the assembly looked upon me as a great dancer. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a private conversation to dancing, and gave each other an account of what had happened to them since their parting; but they were interrupted by Seraphina, who being informed of their meeting sent for them to express her joy at their

reconciliation. 'My children (said she), on this day of rejoicing, it is an addition to my satisfaction to see you restored to each other. Friend Scipio, I give you back your spouse, and protest to you that her conduct has always been irreproachable: you may live here happily together; and you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and be as much devoted to her as your husband is to Señor de Santillana.' Scipio, after this, could not help looking upon his wife as another Penelope, and promised to treat her with all imaginable affection.

The young peasants and their partners, having danced all day, retired to their own houses; but the festival was continued at the castle, where a magnificent supper was prepared; and when it was time to go to rest, the Vicar-General blessed the nuptial bed; Seraphina undressed the bride, and the noblemen of Leyva did me the same honour. What was merry enough, the officers of Don Alphonso, and the ladies of the governess, took it in their heads to perform the same ceremony to Beatrice and Scipio, who, to make the scene more comical, very gravely allowed themselves to be stripped and put to bed.

## CHAPTER X

*What followed the marriage of Gil Blas and the fair Antonia. The beginning of Scipio's history*

On the very next day after my marriage, the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having given me a thousand new marks of friendship; so that my secretary and I remained in the house, with our wives and servants only.

The care which both of us took to please the ladies was not ineffectual; in a little time, I inspired my wife with as much love for me as I had for her; and Scipio made his spouse forget the sorrows which he had made her suffer. Beatrice, who had a pliant, obliging

temper, easily insinuated herself into the favour, and gained the confidence of her mistress. In short, we agreed, all four, to admiration, and began to enjoy a situation worthy of envy. All our days glided away in the most agreeable amusements. Antonia was naturally grave, but Beatrice and I were very gay; and had we been otherwise, Scipio's presence was enough to keep off melancholy. He was an incomparable fellow for society, one of those comical creatures whose appearance alone can make a company merry.

One day that we took a whim, after dinner, to go and have a siesta, in the most agreeable place of the wood, my secretary was in such good humour, that he banished all desire of sleeping, by his merry discourse. 'Hold thy tongue, friend (said I), or if thou are resolved to keep us from taking our nap, entertain us with some story worthy of our attention.'

'With all my heart, sir (answered he). Shall I recount the history of King Pelayo[1]?' 'I would rather hear thy own (I replied); but that is a pleasure thou hast not thought proper to give me, since we lived together, nor ever will, I suppose.' 'And what is the reason? (said he). If I have not recounted my own history, it was because you never expressed the least desire to hear it; it is not, therefore, my fault that you are ignorant of my adventures; and if you are in the least curious to know them, I am ready to satisfy your curiosity.' Antonia, Beatrice, and I took him at his word, and disposed ourselves in order, to hear his narration, which could not miss of having a good effect, either in diverting, or lulling us asleep.

'Had it depended upon me (said Scipio), I should have been the son of some grandee, or knight of Alcántara, at least; but as one does not choose his own father, you must know that mine was an honest soldier of the Holy Brotherhood, Torribio Scipio by name. While he was travelling to and fro on the highway, where his profession obliged him, almost

[1] See Book I, Chapter iv, Vol. i, p. 20, *n.*

always, to be, he met by accident, one day, between Cuenca and Toledo, a young gipsy, whom he thought very handsome. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole fortune in a kind of knapsack on her back: "Which way do you go, my dear?" said he to her, softening his voice, which was naturally rough. "Señor Cavalier (answered she), I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood, in some shape or other." "That is a laudable intention (he resumed), and I don't doubt that you have more strings than one to your bow." "Yes, thank God (said she), I have more talents than one; I can compose pomatums and essences for the ladies; I tell fortunes, turn the sieve to find things that are lost[1], and show all that people want to see in a glass or mirror."

'Torribio, concluding that such a girl would be a very advantageous match for him, who could scarce live by his employment, though he was very dexterous at it, offered to marry her: she accepted the proposal, and they repaired with all diligence to Toledo, where they were wedded; and you see in me the worthy fruit of these noble nuptials. They settled in the suburbs, where my mother began to sell pomatums and essences; but that trade not answering, she became a fortune-teller. It was then that she saw the crowns and pistoles shower upon her; a thousand dupes, of both sexes, soon raised the reputation of Coscolina[2], which was the gipsy's name. Somebody came everyday, to beg she would employ her ministry for him: sometimes a needy nephew, who wanted to know when his uncle, whose sole heir he was, would set out for the other world: and sometimes a girl, wishing to know if a certain cavalier, to whom she had granted the favour, on promise of marriage, would keep his word.

'Please to observe, that my mother's predictions

[1] See Book IV, Chapter viii, Vol. i, p. 300, *n.*

[2] The name Coscolina is taken from the anonymous *Vida y hechos de Estebanillo Gonzalez* (1646).

were always favourable to those who solicited them: if they proved true, good and well; but when they came back to reproach her, because the contrary of what she had prophesied came to pass, she answered coldly, that they must attribute it to the demon, who, notwithstanding the force of the conjurations that she employed to make him reveal what would happen, was, sometimes, so malicious as to deceive her.

'When my mother, for the honour of her profession, thought she must make the devil appear in her operations, Torribio Scipio always acted that part, which he performed perfectly well; the roughness of his voice and ugliness of his face giving him an appearance suitable to the character which he represented. Those that were in the least timorous, were always terrified by my father's figure. But one day, unfortunately, there came a brutal fellow of a captain to see the devil, whom he ran through the body. The Holy Office, informed of the devil's death, sent its officers to the house of Coscolina, whom they seized with all her effects; and I, who was then but seven years old, was put into the hospital of *los Niños*[1]. There were in that house charitable clergymen, who, being well paid for the education of poor orphans, were at the trouble of teaching them to read and write. They looked upon me as a promising child, and, on that account, distinguished me from the rest, by choosing me to run on their errands. They sent me into the city with letters and messages; and I made the responses at Mass. By way of recompense, they undertook to teach me the Latin tongue; but they behaved so rudely, and treated me with such rigour, notwithstanding the small services I did them, that, being no longer able to bear it, I ran away one morning early, when I was sent out on an errand; and, far from returning to the hospital, quitted Toledo by the suburbs that lie on the Seville side of the city. Though I was scarce yet nine years old, I felt a sensible pleasure

[1] *Los Niños* = the children: Scipio, in fact, was placed in the public orphanage.

in being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money, and without food; but what did that signify? I had no lessons to study, nor themes to compose. After having walked about two hours, my little legs began to refuse their service: I had never before made such a long journey; and I found myself obliged to halt and give them some rest. I sat down under a tree, by the side of the road; and there, for my amusement, took my rudiments out of my pocket, and read it in sport; then remembering the stripes and floggings which it had made me receive, I tore out the leaves, saying in great wrath: "Ah, dog of a book! thou shalt never make me shed tears again." While I thus glutted my revenge, strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, a hermit passed by, with a white beard, large spectacles, and a venerable air. He came up to me; and we examined each other with great eagerness. "My little gentleman (said he, smiling), we seem to look at one another with great attention: I believe it would not be a bad scheme for us to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards hence." "I am your humble servant (answered I hastily): I have no ambition to be a hermit." The good old man laughed at this reply; and embracing me, said: "Don't be frightened at my dress, my son; though it is not agreeable, it is useful; it makes me lord of a charming retreat, and of the neighbouring villages; the inhabitants of which love, or rather idolize me. Come along with me (added he), and I will give you a jacket like this that I wear. If you choose it, you shall share with me the sweets of my retired life; and if you don't like it, upon trial, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may also be assured that I will not fail to give you a gratification at parting." I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who asked me several questions; to which I answered with an ingenuousness which I have not always preserved in the sequel. When we came to the hermitage, he presented to me some fruit, which I devoured, having eaten

nothing the whole day but a morsel of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted in the morning at the hospital. The anchorite, seeing me make such good use of my jaws, said, "Courage, my child; don't spare the fruit; I have ample provision of it, thank God: and I did not bring thee hither to let thee starve." This was indeed very true; for in less than an hour after our arrival, he lighted a fire, spitted a leg of mutton, and, while I turned the spit, covered a small table with a very dirty napkin, upon which he laid two plates, one for himself, and another for me.

'When the mutton was ready, he took it off the spit, and cut some slices for our supper, which was not a dry meal; for we drank excellent wine, of which also he had good store. "Well, my chicken (said he, when we had done eating), art thou satisfied with my ordinary? This is the manner in which thou wilt be treated everyday, if thou livest with me. Besides, thou shalt do what thou pleasest in this hermitage. All that I exact of thee, is, to accompany me when I go a-begging through the neighbouring villages; and lead an ass with two panniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with eggs, bread, flesh, and fish. This is all I require of thee." "I will do everything you desire (I replied), provided you don't oblige me to learn Latin." Brother Chrysostom (that was the old hermit's name) could not help laughing at my simplicity; and assured me anew, that he did not intend to force my inclination.

'We went a-begging the very next day with the ass, which I led by the halter, and reaped a plentiful harvest; every peasant being glad of an opportunity to put something in our panniers: one threw a whole loaf; another, a large piece of bacon; a third, a partridge: in short, we brought home victuals enough for eight days: a circumstance that denotes the great friendship and esteem that the country-people had for the hermit. It is true, he was of great use to them, in giving them his advice when they came to consult him, in re-establishing peace in families where discord

reigned, in marrying their daughters, in furnishing them with remedies for a thousand sorts of diseases, and in teaching prayers proper for barren women, who wished to have children.

'By what I have said, you see that I was well fed in my hermitage: I was as well accommodated in point of sleeping: stretched upon good fresh straw, with a cushion of coarse cloth under my head, and a covering of the same stuff over my body, I made but one nap, which lasted all night long. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised to give me a hermit's garb, made one for me from an old robe that he used to wear, and called me little Brother Scipio. As soon as I appeared in the villages, in that regular habit, I was thought so handsome, that the ass was better loaded than formerly: the business was, who should give most to the little brother, with whose figure they were so well pleased.

'The easy idle life which I led with the old hermit could not be disagreeable to a boy of my age: accordingly, I liked it so well, that I should have continued there still, if the fates had not spun for me days of a very different kind: but the destiny which I was bound to fulfil, soon detached me from idleness, and made me quit Brother Chrysostom, as you shall hear. I frequently perceived the old man at work upon the cushion that served him for a pillow; he did nothing but sew and unsew it; and I observed one day that he put money into it. This remark was attended by a curiosity which I proposed to gratify the very first journey he should take to Toledo, whither he was wont to go once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, without having as yet any other design than of satisfying my curiosity. At length the old man set out, and I ripped up his pillow, where I found among the wool with which it was filled, the value of about fifty crowns in different sorts of coin.

This treasure, in all probability, was the gratitude of the country people, whom the hermit had cured by his remedies, and of the women who had been

blessed with children, by virtue of his prayers. Be this as it will, I no sooner saw that it was money, which I could appropriate to myself with impunity, than my Egyptian disposition[1] prevailed. I was seized with a desire of stealing it, which can be attributed to nothing but the force of that blood which circulated in my veins. I yielded to the temptation without resistance, secured the money in a kind of bag where we kept our combs and nightcaps; then quitting my hermit's habit, and resuming that of the orphan, I ran away from the hermitage, believing that I carried off in my bag the whole riches of the Indies.

'You have heard my beginning (continued Scipio), and I don't doubt that you expect a train of facts of the same nature: your expectation will not be deceived: I have many other such exploits to recount, before I come to my laudable actions; but I will come to them at last: and you will see, by my narration, that a rogue may very well turn an honest man.

'Child as I was, I was not fool enough to return to Toledo; that would have been exposing me to the chance of meeting Brother Chrysostom, who would have made me restore my treasure in a very disagreeable manner: I followed another road, which conducted me to the village of Galves, where I stopped at an inn, the landlady of which was a widow of forty, who had all the qualities requisite for turning the penny. This woman no sooner cast her eyes upon me, than, judging by my dress that I was a fugitive from the orphan-hospital, she asked who I was, and whither I went. I answered, that having lost both father and mother, I wanted to go to service. "Child (said she), canst thou read?" I assured her that I both read and wrote to admiration. Indeed, I could form my letters, and join them in such a manner, as somewhat resembled writing; and that is enough for the occasions of a village tavern. "I take thee into my service (said the landlady) thou wilt not be altogether useless, but shalt keep an account of all my

[1] *Mon naturel bohémien* = my gipsy instinct.

debts active and passive. I will give thee no wages (added she), because the good company that come here never forget the servants; so that thou mayst depend upon receiving good perquisites."

'I accepted the proposal, reserving to myself, as you may well believe, the right of changing the air, as soon as my stay at Galves should become disagreeable. When I found myself engaged in the service of this inn, I became very uneasy in my mind! I did not desire to be thought a moneyed man; and was very anxious to know where I should conceal my hoard, so as that it should be secure from every stranger's hand. I did not as yet know the house well enough, to trust to those places which seemed most proper to secure it. With what perplexity are riches attended! I determined, however, to put my bag in a corner of our corn-loft where there was straw; and believing it more safe there, than in any other place, made myself as easy as possible. There were three servants in this house, a fat ostler, a young maid of Galicia, and myself: each of us drew as much as we could from the travellers that halted, whether they came on horseback or a-foot. I commonly caught some halfpence of these gentlemen, when I brought in the bill; they gave something also to the ostler, for taking care of their beasts: but as for the Galician, who was the idol of all the carriers that passed[1], she got as many crowns as we did farthings. Every penny that I received, I carried to increase my treasure in the corn-loft; and the more I saw my wealth increase, the more did I feel my little heart attached to it: I sometimes kissed the coins, and contemplated the different pieces with a degree of rapture which none but misers can conceive.

'This affection for my treasure obliged me to go and visit it thirty times a day: I frequently met the landlady upon the stair; and she being naturally distrustful, was curious one day to know what it was

[1] A reminiscence of Maritornes in *Don Quixote*, Part I, Chapter xvi.

that could bring me every moment to the corn-loft. Thither, therefore, she went, and searched every corner, imagining that I, perhaps, concealed in that place some things which I had stolen in the house. She did not forget to remove the straw that covered my bag, which having found, she opened it; and seeing crowns and pistoles appear, believed, or pretended to believe, that I had stolen them from her. She seized the sum total accordingly; then, calling me little wretch, and little rascal, ordered the ostler, who was entirely devoted to her will, to give me fifty good lashes, which when I had received, she turned me out of doors, saying, that she would suffer no knave to live in her house. In vain did I protest that I had not robbed the landlady: she maintained the contrary; and of course her word was believed rather than mine. Thus, Brother Chrysostom's money passed from one thief to another.

'I lamented the loss of my money, as a man mourns the death of an only child; and though my tears did not retrieve what I had lost, at least they excited the compassion of some people who saw them shed; and, among others, of the curate of Galves, who was passing by chance. He seemed moved at my melancholy condition, and carried me along with him to the parsonage; where, in order to gain my confidence, or rather to pump me, he began by pitying my situation. "How much (said he) does this poor child deserve compassion! It is not surprising, if, abandoned to himself in such a tender age, he has committed a bad action. Most men find it difficult to live honest through the whole course of their lives." Then, addressing himself to me, "My son (added he), from what part of Spain do you come, and who are your parents? You seem to be of some good family. Tell me ingenuously, and be assured that I will not abandon you."

'The curate, by this politic and charitable discourse, engaged me insensibly to discover all my affairs with great sincerity. I made a general confession. After

which, he said, "Friend, though it does not become hermits to hoard up money, that does not lessen your crime; in robbing Brother Chrysostom, you have transgressed that article of the decalogue which forbids theft: but I'll oblige the landlady to restore the money, which I will send to the hermit; so that your conscience may be easy on that score." But this, I swear, was the least of my uneasiness. The curate, who had a design of his own, did not stop there: "My child (said he), I interest myself in your behalf, and will procure a good place for you. I will, to-morrow, send you by a carrier to my nephew, who is a canon of the cathedral of Toledo: he will not refuse, at my request, to receive you into the number of his lackeys, who live plentifully, like so many incumbents, on the revenue of his prebend; you will be perfectly well situated, I can assure you."

'I was so much consoled by this assurance, that I no longer thought of the bag, nor the stripes which I had received, my mind being wholly possessed with the pleasure of living like an incumbent. Next day, while I was at breakfast, a carrier came to the parsonage, according to the curate's orders, with two mules bridled and saddled. I was helped up on the one, the carrier mounted the other, and we set out for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a fellow of humour, who liked nothing better than to make himself merry at another's expense. "My little junior (said he), you have a good friend in the curate of Galves; he could not give you a better proof of his affection, than that of recommending you to the service of his nephew the canon, whom I have the honour to know, and who is, without contradiction, the pearl of the whole chapter. He is none of those devotees whose pale and meagre faces preach up mortification. He has a capacious countenance, a rosy complexion, a merry look, is a jovial soul, who enjoys the present hour, and in particular loves good cheer. You will live in his house like a little prince."

'The rogue of a carrier perceiving that I listened with great satisfaction, continued to extol the happiness I should enjoy in the canon's service; and did not leave off speaking until we arrived at the village of Obisa[1], where we stopped a little to bait our mules. The carrier, while he walked about in the inn, let fall by accident, out of his pocket, a paper, which I was cunning enough to pick up, without being observed, and which I found means to read while he was in the stable. It was a letter directed to the priests of the orphan hospital, and conceived in these terms:

'"Gentlemen, I thought I was bound in charity to send back to you a little knave, who is a runaway from your hospital. He does not seem to want capacity, but deserves to be carefully mewed up; and I hope, that by proper correction, he will in time do well. That God may preserve your pious and charitable Worships, is the prayer of

'"The Curate of Galves."

'When I had read this letter, which informed me of the curate's good intentions, I did not long hesitate. To leave the inn, and gain the banks of the Tagus, which was more than a league from thence, was the work of a moment. Fear lent me wings to fly from the priests of the orphan hospital, to whom I would by no means return, so much was I disgusted with their manner of teaching the Latin tongue. I entered Toledo as gaily as if I had known where to board. True, it is a city of benediction, in which a man of genius, reduced to the necessity of living at his neighbour's expense, cannot die of hunger. Scarce had I arrived in the market-place, when a well-dressed cavalier, whom I passed, laid hold of my arm, and said: "Harkee, my boy, will you serve me? I should be glad to have such a lackey as you." "And I should be glad (answered I) to have such a master as you." "If that be the case (he resumed), thou art

[1] This appears to be a mistake for Cobisa.

mine from this moment. Follow me." This I did, without making any further reply.

'This cavalier, who might be about thirty years of age, and was called Don Abel, lodged in a house, where he possessed a very handsome apartment. He was by profession a gamester, and we lived together in this manner: in the morning, I cut as much tobacco for him as would fill five or six pipes, brushed his clothes, and went for the barber to shave him, and dress his moustache. After which, he went out, and made a tour among the gambling-hells[1], from whence he returned about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. But each morning before he went out, he gave me three reals for my day's expense, leaving me at liberty to do what I would, until ten o'clock at night. He was very well satisfied with me, provided he found me at home when he returned. He ordered a suit of livery to be made for me, so that I looked like the page of a lady of the town. I was very well satisfied with my place, and certainly I could not have found one more agreeable to my humour.

'I had led this happy life almost a whole month, when my master asked if I was pleased with his behaviour. I answered, that I could not be more so. "Well, then (he resumed), we shall set out to-morrow for Seville, whither my affairs call me. Thou wilt not be sorry to see that capital of Andalusia.

He that hath not Seville seen
(saith the proverb),
Is no traveller, I ween[2].

'I assured him that I was ready to follow him whithersoever he should go. That very day, the Seville carrier came to his lodging, to fetch a large

[1] *Les tripots*, the phrase in the original, is literally translated 'tennis-courts': but, by extension, the word *tripot* is applied as above.

[2] A free rendering of the popular doggerel—

Quien no ha visto á Sevilla
No ha visto maravilla.

coffer that contained all his movables; and in the morning we set out for Andalusia[1].

'Señor Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he never lost, except when he chose to lose. This talent often obliged him to change his place of habitation, that he might avoid the resentment of dupes; and this was the cause of our present journey. Being arrived at Seville, we took lodgings near the gate of Córdova, and began to live as we had lived at Toledo: but my master found a difference between these two cities. In the gambling-hells of Seville he met with gamesters who played as successfully as he, so that he came home sometimes very much out of humour. One morning, being chagrined at the loss of one hundred pistoles, which he ventured the preceding day, he asked why I had not carried his dirty linen to a woman whom he employed to wash and perfume it. I answered that I had forgotten. Upon which, falling into a passion, he gave me half a dozen smacks in the face, so roughly, that he made me see more candles than ever burnt in Solomon's temple. "There, little wretch (said he), there is something to make you mind your business. Must I be always at your tail, to tell you what you have to do? Why are you not as ready to work as to eat? Are you such a beast, as to be incapable of anticipating my orders and occasions?" So saying, he went out of his apartment, leaving me very much mortified at the blows I had received for such a slight fault. I don't know what adventure happened to him soon after in the gambling-hell, but one evening he came home very much heated, and said, "Scipio, I am resolved to go to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow, in a ship bound for Genoa. I have my own reasons for making that voyage; wilt thou not accompany me, and lay hold of such a fair occasion to see the most delightful country in the world?" I said I would, but at the same time proposed to dis-

[1] From this point onwards to the end of the present chapter, Lesage adapts, with very slight changes, the *Vida y hechos de Estebanillo Gonzalez*, Chapter ii.

appear just when he intended to embark. I thought I would revenge myself of him in this manner, and was very well pleased with the scheme, which I could not help imparting to a professed bravo whom I met in the street; for since my arrival at Seville, I had contracted some bad acquaintances, and this in particular. I told him in what manner, and for what I had been buffeted, then communicated my design of leaving Don Abel when he should be just ready to go on board, and asked his opinion of my resolution.

'The bravo frowned while he listened to me, and twirled the curls of his moustache; then blaming my master with an air of gravity: "My little gentleman (said he), you are dishonoured for ever, if you restrict yourself to that frivolous revenge which you have hatched. It is not enough to let Don Abel depart by himself; that would not be punishment sufficient. The chastisement must be proportioned to the injury. Let us therefore carry off his goods and money, which we will share like brothers after he is gone." Although I was naturally inclined to thieving, I was frightened at the proposal of such an important robbery. Nevertheless, the arch rogue who made it did not fail to persuade me to it; and you shall hear the success of our enterprise. The bravo, who was a big, strong fellow, came to our lodging next day in the twilight, when I showed him the coffer in which my master had already secured his effects, and asked if he could carry such a weight. "Such a weight! (said he) know that, when the business is to carry off the goods of another, I can lift Noah's ark." So saying, he flung the coffer on his shoulders with ease, and went downstairs with it upon tip-toes. I followed him with some caution, and we were just going out at the street-door, when Don Abel, brought thither so seasonably by his good genius, appeared all of a sudden.

'"Where art thou going with the coffer?" (said he). I was so confounded, that I stood silent, and the bravo seeing the affair miscarry, threw down his load, and betook himself to flight, in order to avoid explanations.

"Where art thou going with the coffer?" (said my master for the second time). "Sir (answered I, more dead than alive), I am going to carry it on board of the ship in which you are to embark to-morrow for Italy." "Ha! (he replied) dost thou know in what ship I intended to sail?" "No, sir (said I), but I have a tongue in my head, and I should have inquired at the harbour, where somebody would have certainly told me." At this my answer, which he suspected, he darted such a furious look at me, that I was afraid of a second beating. "Who ordered you (cried he) to bring my coffer out of the house?" "You yourself (said I). Don't you remember how you upbraided me some days ago? Did not you say, when you beat me, that you expected I would anticipate your orders, and do what was proper for your service of my own accord? Now, it was in consequence of this direction that I employed a man to carry your coffer to the ship." The gamester observing that I was more mischievous than he imagined, dismissed me immediately, saying, with an air of indifference, "Go, Master Scipio, and heaven be your guide. I don't choose to play with people who have sometimes a card too many, sometimes one too few. Get out of my sight (added he, in another tone), lest I make you sing without your gamut." I saved him the trouble of repeating his command, and got off in a twinkling, being woundily afraid that he would strip me of my clothes, which, however, he luckily spared. I walked along the street, considering where I could lie, with my two reals, which constituted my whole stock. I arrived at the gate of the Archbishop's palace; and as his Grace's supper was then dressing, an agreeable savour issued from the kitchen, and diffused itself a whole league around. "Zooks! (said I to myself) I should like to dispatch one of those ragouts which salute my nose. I should even be contented with an opportunity of dipping my four fingers and thumb in it. What! can't I fall upon some method of tasting these dainties that smell so agreeably? The thing does not seem

impossible." I whetted my imagination accordingly, and, by dint of musing, hatched a trick, which I immediately put in practice, and which succeeded to my wish. I entered the court of the palace, and running towards the kitchen, cried as loud as I could, "Help! help!" as if I had been pursued by some assassin.

'At my repeated cries, Mr. Diego, the Archbishop's cook, with two or three scullions, came running out to know the cause; and seeing nobody but me, asked why I made such a noise. "Ah! sir (said I, pretending to be frightened almost out of my wits), for the love of St. Polycarp, pray save me from the fury of a bravo that wants to kill me." "Where is this bravo? (cried Diego) you are quite alone, without so much as a cat at your heels. Go, my child, lay aside your fear. It was probably somebody who wanted to terrify you for his diversion, and who did well not to follow you into this palace; for, if he had, we should have cut off his ears." "No, no (said I to the cook), he did not pursue me for his diversion. He is a big, ill-looking fellow, who intends to strip me, and waits hard by in the street to catch me as I go out." "He shall wait a long time, then (he replied), for you shall stay here till to-morrow, and want for neither supper nor bed."

'I was transported with joy when I heard these words; and it was a ravishing sight to me, when, being conducted into the kitchen by Mr. Diego, I beheld the preparations for his Grace's supper. I reckoned fifteen persons at work, but I could not number the dishes that I saw, so careful had Providence been on behalf of the Archbishop. It was then that, feasting upon the steams of the ragouts which I had only smelled afar off before, I became acquainted with sensuality. I had the honour to sup and sleep with the scullions, whose friendship I gained to that degree, that next day, when I went to thank Mr. Diego for the asylum he had so generously afforded, he said, "Our kitchen lads tell me they would be glad to have you for a

comrade, they like your humour so well: would you choose to be their companion?" I answered, "That if I enjoyed that piece of good fortune, I should think myself perfectly happy." "If that be the case, my friend (said he), look upon yourself from this moment as an officer of the palace." So saying, he went and presented me to the major-domo, who, on account of my sprightly look, judged me worthy to be received among the turn-spits.

'I was no sooner in possession of such an honourable employment, than Mr. Diego, according to the custom of cooks in great families, who privately send victuals to their mistresses, chose me to carry to a certain lady in the neighbourhood sometimes loins of veal, and sometimes fowl or venison. This good lady was a widow scarce turned of thirty, very handsome, very smart, and to all appearance, not over-faithful to her cook, who not only furnished her with victuals, bread, sugar and oil, but also provided her with good wine, all at the expense of the Archbishop.

'I was effectually improved in the palace of his Grace, where I played a very pleasant prank, which is still spoken of at Seville. The pages, and some other domestics, in order to celebrate their master's birth-day, took it in their heads to represent a comedy. They chose that of the *Benavides*[1]; and as they had occasion for a boy of my age, to play the part of the young King of Leon, they cast their eyes upon me. The major-domo, who piqued himself upon his talent of declamation, undertook to instruct me, and after he had given me a few lessons, assured them that I would not be the worst actor in the play. As our master was at the expense of the entertainment, no cost was spared to render it magnificent. A theatre was built in the largest hall of the palace, and decorated with great taste. There was a bed of turf made in the back scene, on which I was to appear asleep, and the Moors fall upon me to make me prisoner.

[1] A play by Lope de Vega, first printed in the second part of his *Comedias* (Madrid, 1609).

When the actors were perfect in their parts, the Archbishop fixed the day for the representation, and did not fail to invite the most considerable noblemen and ladies of the city to come and see it. The day being come, each actor was busied with his dress. As for mine, it was brought to me by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo; who, having been at the trouble of teaching me my part, was also pleased to superintend my dress. The tailor clothed me with a rich velvet robe, trimmed with gold lace and buttons, with hanging sleeves adorned with fringe of the same metal; and the major-domo himself placed upon my head a crown of paper, powdered with a quantity of fine pearls, intermixed with false stones. Besides, they girded me with a sash of pink-coloured silk wrought with silver flowers; and everything they said to me seemed to lend me wings to run away with the plunder. At length the play began about twilight. I opened the scene, by pronouncing some verses, importing that, being unable to keep myself awake, I was going to abandon myself to slumber; at the same time, I withdrew, and laid down on the bed of turf which had been prepared for me; but instead of falling asleep, I began to consider how I could get into the street, and escape with my royal robes. A little private stair that led down under the theatre into the hall, seemed proper for the execution of my design. I accordingly got up nimbly, and seeing that nobody took notice of me, slipped down that stair which conducted me into the hall, the door of which I gained, crying, "Room! room! I am going to change my dress." Every one made way for me, so that in less than two minutes I got out of the palace with impunity, and by favour of the night, repaired to the house of a bravo of my acquaintance.

'He was perfectly astonished to see me in that garb; and when I imparted the affair, he laughed until he was ready to burst; then embracing me with so much the more joy, as he flattered himself with the hope of sharing the spoils of the King of Leon, he congratu-

lated me on having performed such a fine stroke, and told me that if I went on at that rate, my genius would one day make a great noise in the world. After we had sufficiently made ourselves merry, "What shall we do with this rich dress?" (said I to the bravo) who answered, "Give yourself no trouble on that score. I know an honest broker, who, without expressing the least curiosity, buys everything that is brought to him, provided he likes the bargain; to-morrow morning I will go and bring him hither." In effect, the bravo went out next day early, leaving me a-bed in his room, and in two hours returned with the broker, who carried a yellow bag under his arm. "Friend (said he to me), this is Señor Ibañez de Segovia, who, in spite of the bad example shown by his brethren of the trade, deals with the most scrupulous integrity. He will tell you to a farthing, the value of this dress that you want to part with, and you may depend upon his estimation." "Yes, certainly (said the broker). I must be a wretch indeed, if I prized a thing under the true value. That is a crime with which I was never taxed, thank God, and no man shall ever lay it to the charge of Ibañez de Segovia. Let us see the goods you want to sell, and I will conscientiously tell you what they are worth." "Here they are" (said the bravo, showing them), and you must allow that nothing can be more magnificent: observe the beauty of that Genoa velvet, and the richness of the trimming." "I am quite charmed with it! (replied the broker, after he had viewed it attentively) nothing can be finer." "And what do you think of the pearls of this crown?" (resumed my friend). "If they were more round (said Ibañez), they would be inestimable: however, such as they are, I think them very pretty, and like them as well as the rest of the dress. I sincerely own it (continued he), another rogue of a broker in my place would pretend to despise the merchandise, that he might have it cheap, and would not be ashamed of offering twenty pistoles for it; but I, who have some conscience, will give forty."

'If Ibañez had said a hundred, he would not then have been a just appraiser; since the pearls, alone, were well worth two hundred crowns. The bravo, who had an understanding with him, said to me, "You see how fortunate you are in falling into the hands of an honest man. Señor Ibañez prices everything, as if he was upon his deathbed." "That's true (said the broker), and therefore I never rise or fall a farthing in my price. Well (added he), is it a bargain? Shall I count out the money to you?" "Stay (replied the bravo), my friend must first try on his suit of clothes, which I desired you to bring for him. I am mistaken if they won't fit him exactly." Then the broker, untying his bundle, showed me a doublet and hose, of a very good dark-coloured cloth, with silver buttons; the whole seemingly half-worn. I got up to try this dress, which, though both too long and too wide, appeared to these gentlemen to have been made on purpose for me. Ibañez rated it at ten pistoles; and as he never abated one farthing of what he asked, we were obliged to comply with his valuation. So he took thirty pistoles out of his purse, and spread them upon the table; after which, he made another bundle of my crown and royal robes, which he carried off accordingly.

'When he was gone, the bravo said, "I am very well satisfied with this broker." And good reason he had to be so; for I am sure he gave him one hundred pistoles, at least, by way of gratification. But he was not contented with that sum: he took, without ceremony, the half of the money that lay on the table, leaving the other half to me, and saying, "My dear Scipio, with these fifteen pistoles that remain, I advise you to quit this city forthwith; for, you may be assured, that the Archbishop will give orders to search for you everywhere. I should be extremely mortified, if, after having signalized yourself by an action, which will do honour to your history, you should foolishly suffer yourself to be apprehended." I answered that I was fully resolved to leave Seville; and in effect,

after having bought a hat and some shirts, I gained the vast and delightful plain that stretches among vines and olives, to the ancient city of Carmona, and, three days after, arrived at Córdova.

I lodged at an inn, as you enter the great square where the merchants live; and gave myself out for the son of a good family at Toledo, who travelled for my pleasure. I was well enough clothed, to make people believe this story, and the landlord was finally convinced, by the sight of some pistoles, which I let him see, as if by chance. It is probable, indeed, that my tender years made him believe I was some little libertine, who had run away from his parents, after having robbed them. Be this as it may, he did not seem curious to know more than what I told him of the matter: being, in all likelihood, afraid that his curiosity might make me change my lodging. For six reals a day, I lived very well in this inn, which was frequented by a good deal of company; there being at supper in the evening, no less than twelve people at one table. It was very diverting to see every one eating, without speaking a syllable, except one man, who talking incessantly, at random, compensated for the silence of the rest, by his impertinent prating. He affected the wit, told stories, and endeavoured by quaint sayings, to entertain the company, who, from time to time, laughed heartily, though not so much at the brightness of his sallies, as at his ridiculous behaviour.

'As for my part, I paid so little attention to the discourse of this original, that I should have risen from supper, without being able to give any account of what he said, had he not found means to interest me in his conversation. "Gentlemen (said he, towards the end of our meal), I have kept for the dessert a most diverting story: an adventure that befell, a few days ago, at the palace of the Archbishop of Seville. I had it from a bachelor of my acquaintance, who told me that he was present when it happened." These words discomposed me a good deal; I did not doubt

that it was my adventure, which he intended to recount: and I was not mistaken. This person gave a faithful detail of it, and even informed me of what I did not know; that is, what happened in the hall, after my departure: and this you shall hear.

'Scarce had I betook myself to flight, when the Moors, who, according to the performance which was represented, were to carry me off, appeared upon the stage, with a design of surprising me on the bed of turf, where they thought I was asleep; but when they went to seize the King of Leon, they were very much astonished to find neither king nor castle[1]. The play was immediately interrupted; all the actors were perplexed; some called me, others searched for me; one halloed, and another cursed me. The Archbishop perceiving the trouble and confusion that reigned behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. A page, who acted the *gracioso*[2] of the piece, hearing the Prelate's voice, came out and said to his Grace: "My lord, you need not fear that the Moors will take the King of Leon prisoner; he has escaped with his royal robes." "Heaven be praised! (cried the Archbishop) he was very much in the right, to fly from the enemies of our religion, and escape the chains which they had prepared for him. He has, doubtless, returned towards Leon, the capital of his kingdom; and I wish he may get home, without meeting with any bad accident. Let no man go in pursuit of him, for I should be sorry if his Majesty received any mortification from me." The Prelate having spoken in this manner, ordered my part to be read, and the play to go on.'

[1] *Ni roi ni roc*, the phrase in the original, is wrongly translated 'neither king nor knave': the slip is corrected above.

[2] See Book VII, Chapter vi, p. 28, *n.*

## CHAPTER XI

*The sequel of Scipio's history*

'As long as my money lasted, the landlord treated me with great respect; but no sooner did he perceive that my finances were exhausted, than he looked cool upon me, picked a quarrel, and one morning early, desired me to leave his house. I quitted it with disdain, and went into a church belonging to the Dominicans, where, while I heard Mass, an old mendicant came, and asked alms of me. I took two or three maravedis out of my pocket, and giving them to him, said, "Friend, pray to God to send me some good place: if your prayer is heard, you shall not repent of your devotion, and may depend upon my gratitude."

'At these words, the beggar viewed me very attentively, and answered with a serious air: "What post would you have?" "I could wish (said I) to be a lackey in some good family." He then asked if my occasions were pressing. "They cannot be more so (I resumed): for, if I have not the good fortune of being settled very soon, there is no medium; I must either die of hunger, or betake myself to your trade." "If you are reduced to such necessity (said he), you, who are not at all calculated for our business, must be in a very disagreeable situation: but were you in the least accustomed to our way of life, you would prefer it to servitude, which is, without contradiction, inferior to beggary. Nevertheless, since you choose to be a servant, rather than to live a free and independent life, as I do, you shall have a master immediately. Notwithstanding my appearance, I can be of use to you: therefore, come hither to-morrow at the same hour."

'Resolved to be punctual, I returned next day to the same place, where I had not been long, before the mendicant, coming up to me, bade me take the trouble to follow him. I did so; he conducted me to a cellar

not far from the church; and this was the place of his residence. We entered his habitation; and sitting down upon a bench, which was at least a hundred years old, he spoke to me in this manner: "A good action, as the proverb says, always finds its recompense: you gave me charity yesterday, and that determines me to procure a place for you; and this, please God, I will soon perform. I am acquainted with an old Dominican called Father Alexis, who is a holy ecclesiastic, and great confessor. I have the honour to run his errands, and acquit myself in that employment with so much fidelity and discretion, that he never refuses to use his interest for me and my friends. I have spoken to him of you in such a manner, that he is disposed to do you service; and I will present you to his reverence, whenever you please." "There is not a moment to lose (said I to the old beggar): let us go instantly to the good friar." The mendicant consented, and carried me forthwith to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, busy in writing spiritual letters. He interrupted his work to speak to me, and told me that, at the request of the mendicant, he would interest himself in my behalf. "Having been informed (added he) that Señor Balthazar Velazquez wanted a lackey, I wrote this morning in your favour; and he has answered, that he will receive you implicitly, on my recommendation. You may, this very day, go to him from me; he is my penitent and friend." The monk, on this occasion, exhorted me, during three-quarters of an hour, to do my duty with fidelity and diligence. He enlarged particularly on the obligation I was under to serve Velazquez with zeal: after which, he assured me, that he would take care to maintain me in my post, provided my master should be pleased with my behaviour. Having thanked the monk for his generosity, I came out of the convent with the beggar; who told me that Señor Balthazar Velazquez was an old rich woollen-draper of great meekness and simplicity. "I dare say (added he) that you will be perfectly happy in his

family." I inquired whereabouts the citizen lived, and went immediately to his house, after having promised to make an acknowledgement to the beggar, as soon as I should take root in my place. I entered a large shop, where two well-dressed apprentices were walking to and fro, in expectation of customers; and asking if their master was at home, told them I had a message to him from Father Alexis. At the mention of that venerable name, I was shown into the back-shop, where the merchant sat at a bureau, turning over the leaves of a large day-book. I saluted him with great respect, saying, while I advanced, "Señor, I am the young man whom the reverend Father Alexis recommended to you for a lackey." "Ha! welcome, my child (said he); that holy man's recommendation is sufficient. I receive thee into my service, in preference to three or four lackeys that were sent by other people. It is agreed: thy wages run up from this day forward."

'I had not been long in the service of this citizen, before I perceived him to be just such a man as the beggar had described. His simplicity seemed even so great, that I could not help thinking I should find some difficulty in abstaining from playing him some trick or other. He had been a widower four years, and had two children, a son turned of five-and-twenty, and a daughter going in her fifteenth year, who being brought up by a severe duenna, and directed by Father Alexis, walked in the path of virtue: but Gaspar Velazquez, her brother, though nothing had been spared in his education, had all the vices of a young spendthrift. He sometimes lay two or three nights abroad; and if, at his return, his father took it into his head to reprimand him, Gaspar imposed silence upon him, in a tone still higher than that of the old man.

'"Scipio (said the draper to me one day), I have a son who is the sole plague of my life; he is plunged in all manner of debauchery: a circumstance that surprises me very much; for his education was by

no means neglected. I gave him good masters, and my friend Father Alexis hath done his utmost endeavour to put him in the right road; but he could not succeed: Gaspar is fallen into a state of libertinism. Thou wilt say, perhaps, that I treated him too gently in the beginning of his youth; and that he was undone by my indulgence: but that was not the case; he was always chastised when I thought he deserved to be used with rigour: for, good-natured as I am, I have resolution enough, when there is occasion for it. I have even ordered him to be confined; and the consequence was, he became more wicked than ever. In a word, he has one of those bad dispositions, which cannot be improved by good example, remonstrances, or chastisement. Heaven alone can work that miracle."

'If I was not much moved at the sorrow of this unhappy father, at least I pretended to be so. "How much are you to be pitied, sir! (said I) a good man, like you, deserves to have a much better son." "Heaven, my child (answered he), is pleased to deprive me of that consolation. Among other causes which Gaspar gives me to complain of him (added he), I will tell thee in confidence, there is one that makes me very uneasy; that is, the inclination which he has to rob me, and which he but too often finds means to satisfy, in spite of all my vigilance. The lackey, whom you succeed, was in concert with him, and for that reason was turned away. As for thee, I hope thou wilt not suffer thyself to be corrupted by my son; but espouse my interest, as Father Alexis has, doubtless, exhorted thee." "That I'll answer for (said I): his reverence exhorted me a whole hour, to have nothing in view but your advantage: but I can assure you, I had no need of being exhorted to that: I feel myself disposed to serve you faithfully, and my zeal will prove itself on all occasions."

'He who hears one side only, hears nothing. Young Velazquez, who was a devilish beau, judging by my physiognomy, that I should be as easily seduced as

my predecessor, took me aside into a private place, and spoke to me in these terms: "Hark'ee, my dear boy, I am persuaded that my father has charged thee to be a spy upon my actions: take care of thyself: I give thee notice beforehand, that thy employment is none of the most agreeable. If ever I perceive that thou makest thy remarks upon me, I will cudgel thee to death; whereas, if thou wilt assist me in cheating my father, thou mayst depend upon my gratitude. Must I be more plain with thee? Thou shalt have a share of the purchase. Make thy choice, therefore, and declare this instant either for the father or son; for I will admit of no neutrality."

'"Sir (answered I), you are very short with me; and I plainly perceive that I cannot help espousing your cause, though, in my heart, I feel a reluctancy to betray Señor Velazquez." "Thou oughtest to make no scruple in so doing (replied Gaspar): he is an old miser, who wants to keep me still in leading-strings; a wretch who denies me the necessaries of life, in refusing to furnish me with money for my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessaries of life at the age of five-and-twenty: thou must therefore look upon my father in that point of view." "Enough, sir (said I), there is no such thing as holding out against so just a cause of complaint. I offer my service, to second you in your laudable undertakings; but let us conceal our mutual intelligence, that your faithful associate may not be turned out of doors. You will do well, methinks, in affecting to hate me: speak roughly to me before people, and do not spare ill language; even some boxes on the ear, and kicks on the breech, will not be amiss: on the contrary, the more marks of aversion you bestow upon me, the more confidence will Señor Balthazar have in my integrity. As for my part, I will pretend to avoid your conversation: in serving you at table, I will seem to acquit myself with regret; and when I talk of you to the apprentices, don't take it ill, that I rail at you with great bitterness."

'"Egad! (cried Velazquez, hearing my last words)

I admire thy genius, my friend: thou showest, at thy age, an astonishing capacity for intrigue, whence I conceive the most happy presage; for I hope, with thy assistance, I shall not leave my father one single pistole." "You do me a great deal of honour (said I) in depending so much on my intelligence: I will do my utmost endeavour to justify the good opinion you have of my understanding; and if I fail, at least it shall not be my fault."

'It was not long before I let Gaspar see that I was actually the man he wanted; and this is the first service I did him: Balthazar's strong box stood in his chamber, just by his bedside, and served him instead of a pew for prayer. Every time I looked at it my eyesight was regaled; and I frequently said to myself: "Friend strong box, must thou be always locked to me? Shall I never have the pleasure of contemplating thy contents?" As I went whenever I pleased into this chamber, which was forbid to nobody but Gaspar, I happened one day to perceive his father, who thinking himself unobserved, after having opened and locked his strong box, concealed the key behind a hanging. I marked the place well, and imparted my discovery to my young master, who embraced me with joy, saying, "Ah, my dear Scipio! what a charming piece of news is this! Our fortune is made, my child. I will this very day give thee wax, with which thou mayst take the impression of the key, and put it into my hands. I shall easily find an obliging locksmith in Córdova; in which, thank Heaven, there is no scarcity of rogues."

'"But why (said I to Gaspar) would you make a false key, when we can use the true one?" "Because (answered he) my father, through distrust, or some other motive, may take it in his head to hide it elsewhere; and, therefore, it is better to have one for ourselves." I approved of his caution; and yielding to his inclination, prepared for taking the impression of the key. This was executed one morning early, while my old master paid a visit to Father

Alexis, with whom he had usually long conversations. This was not all; I used the key in opening the box, which being filled with large and small bags, threw me into a charming perplexity: I did not know which to choose, such affection did I conceive for both kinds. Nevertheless, as the fear of being surprised did not permit me to make a long scrutiny, I laid hold of one of the largest, at a venture: then locking the coffer, and replacing the key behind the hangings, I quitted the chamber with my prey, which I went and concealed under my bed in a small wardrobe, where I lay.

'Having performed this operation so successfully, I went immediately to the young Velazquez, who waited for me in a house, where he had appointed to meet me, and gave him infinite joy, by telling what I had done. He was so well satisfied, that he loaded me with caresses, and generously offered me the half of the money which was in the bag: but that I refused, saying, "No, no, sir; this first bag is your own; use it for your occasions: I will soon return to the strong box, where, thank Heaven, there is money enough for us both." In effect, three days after this, I carried off a second bag, containing, like the former, five hundred crowns, of which I would receive one-fourth only, notwithstanding the pressing instances of Gaspar, that it should be equally divided between us.

'As soon as this young man found himself well stocked, and, consequently, in a condition to satisfy his passion for women and play, he abandoned himself entirely to both: he had even the misfortune to fall in love with one of those famous coquettes, who devour and swallow the largest patrimonies in a very little time; and being at a terrible expense on her account, laid me under the necessity of paying so many visits to the strong box that at length old Velazquez perceived himself robbed. "Scipio (said he one morning), I must tell thee a secret: somebody robs me, my friend: my strong box has been opened, and several bags taken out: this is certain. Who must be

taxed with this theft? Or, rather, who else than my son Gaspar, who has entered my chamber by stealth, or been introduced by thee? for I am tempted to believe thee his accomplice, though you seem to hate one another so much. Nevertheless, I will not listen to my suspicion, since Father Alexis hath answered for thy fidelity." I replied that, thank Heaven, I never coveted my neighbour's wealth; and accompanied that lie with a hypocritical grimace, which served instead of an apology.

'The old man, sure enough, said no more of the matter; but he did not leave off including me in his suspicion; and taking his precautions against our attempts, ordered his strong box to be secured by another lock, the key of which he always kept in his pocket. By these means, all commerce between us and the bags being broken, we looked very silly, especially Gaspar, who being no longer able to gratify the extravagance of his nymph, was afraid of losing the privilege of visiting her. He had genius enough, however, to invent an expedient which supported his expense a few days longer: and that ingenious shift was, to appropriate to himself, by way of loan, all my share of the evacuations which I had performed in the strong box. I gave it all to the very last piece; and this, methinks, may pass for an anticipated restitution which I made to the old merchant, in the person of his heir.

'The young man, when he had exhausted this resource, considering that he had now none left, fell into a profound and gloomy fit of melancholy, which gradually disordered his reason. He looked upon his father as the only plague of his life; he was seized with the most violent despair; and, without listening to the voice of Nature, the wretch conceived the horrible design of poisoning his parent. He not only communicated this execrable project to me, but even proposed that I should be the instrument of his vengeance. Being struck with horror at the proposal, "Sir (said I), is it possible that you should be so

abandoned by Heaven as to form this abominable resolution? What! are you capable of murdering the author of your own being? Shall it be said that in Spain, in the very bosom of Christianity, a crime was committed, the very idea of which raises horror in the most barbarous nations? No, my dear master! (added I, falling on my knees before him) no, you will not commit an action which would justly incense the whole world against you, and be attended with the most infamous chastisement."

'I said a great many things more, to dissuade Gaspar from such a guilty undertaking. I don't know where I found all the arguments of a virtuous man, which I used to combat his despair: but certain it is, I spoke like a doctor of Salamanca, though I was but a boy, and no other than the son of Coscolina. Nevertheless, in vain did I represent to him that he ought to reflect seriously, and courageously repel those detestable sentiments which had taken possession of his soul; all my eloquence was ineffectual. He hung his head, and remained in sullen silence: so that I concluded he would not swerve from his resolution, notwithstanding all I could say.

'Whereupon, I went and demanded a private conversation with my old master; to whom, when we were shut up in a room together, I said, "Suffer me, sir, to throw myself at your feet, and implore your mercy." So saying, I fell down before him in great agitation, with my countenance bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at my prostration, and the disorder of my looks, asked what I had done. "A deed (I replied) of which I now heartily repent, and with which I will upbraid myself as long as I live. I have been weak enough to listen to your son, and to assist him in stealing your money." I then made a sincere confession of all that had passed on that subject: after which, I gave him an account of the conversation I had with Gaspar, whose design I revealed, without forgetting the least circumstance.

'Bad as his opinion of his son was, old Velazquez

could scarce credit my information, the truth of which, however, having no reason to doubt; "Scipio (said he, raising me, for I was still on my knees), I pardon thee, in consideration of the important notice thou hast given me. Gaspar (added he, raising his voice), Gaspar has a design upon my life! Ah, ungrateful son! ah, monster! who had better been stifled in the birth, than allowed to live and become a parricide! What cause hast thou to attempt my life? I allow thee a reasonable yearly sum for thy pleasures, and thou art not satisfied? Must I permit thee to squander away my whole fortune?" Having uttered this bitter apostrophe, he laid injunctions upon me to keep the secret, and said he would consider what was to be done in such a delicate conjuncture.

'I was very anxious to know what resolution this unfortunate father would take, when that very day he sent for Gaspar, and spoke thus to him, without manifesting a tittle of what he had in his head. "Son, I have received a letter from Mérida, importing that if you choose to marry, you may have a maiden of that place, who is but fifteen years old, perfectly handsome, and mistress of a good fortune; if you have no reluctance to the marriage, we will set out early to-morrow for Mérida, visit the lady who is proposed, and if you find her to your liking, you shall espouse her forthwith." Gaspar hearing mention made of a good fortune, which he thought was already in his clutches, answered without hesitation, that he was ready to go: so that, next morning at daybreak, they departed by themselves, mounted on two good mules.

'When they had got as far as the mountains of Fesira, into a place as much frequented by robbers as dreaded by travellers, Balthazar alighted, desiring his son to do the same: the young man obeyed, and asked the reason of their quitting their mules in that place. "I will tell thee (answered the old man, darting at him a look in which his grief and indignation were painted), we have no business at Mérida; and the marriage which I mentioned is only a fable I

invented to bring thee hither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son! I am not ignorant of the crime which thou hast hatched; I know that I am to be presented with a poison prepared by thee: but fool that thou art, dost thou flatter thyself that thou canst deprive me of my life, in that manner, with impunity? Thou art mistaken, thy guilt would soon be discovered, and thou wouldst perish by the hand of the executioner. There is (added he) a surer method of satiating thy rage, without exposing thyself to an ignominious death: we are here without witnesses, in a place where murders are committed every-day: since thou art so estranged from my blood, plunge thy poniard into my bosom, and the murder will be imputed to robbers." So saying, Balthazar baring his breast, and pointing to his heart, "Here, Gaspar (added he), strike the mortal blow, and punish me for having given being to such a wretch as thee."

'Young Velazquez, thunderstruck at these words, far from seeking to justify himself, fell without sense and motion at his father's feet. The good old man seeing him in that condition, which seemed to be the beginning of repentance, could not help yielding to his paternal weakness, and of flying to his assistance: but Gaspar no sooner recovered the use of his reason, than, being unable to bear the presence of a father so justly incensed, he made an effort to get up; mounted his mule, and rode off without speaking a word. Balthazar let him go, and leaving him to the remorse of his own conscience, returned to Córdova, where, six months after, he learned that his son had thrown himself into the monastery of Carthusians at Seville, there to pass the rest of his days in penitence.'

## CHAPTER XII

*The conclusion of Scipio's history*

'Bad example sometimes produces good effects. The conduct of young Velazquez made me reflect seriously upon my own; I began to combat my thievish inclinations, and live like an honest man. The habit of seizing all the money I could lay my hands on, was so much confirmed in me, by repeated acts, that it was not easily vanquished. Nevertheless, I did not despair of succeeding, imagining, that to become virtuous, required only a sincere desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to bless my efforts; I no longer beheld the old merchant's strong box with a covetous eye; and I believe that had it been in my power, I should not have touched one of his bags: I own, however, that it would have been very imprudent in him, to put my infant integrity to such a proof; and therefore, Velazquez took care not to do it.

'Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, and knight of the order of Alcántara, came frequently to our house; we had his custom, and if he was not the best, he was, at least, the most noble of those who used the shop. I had the good fortune to please that cavalier, who, every time he met me, encouraged me to speak, and seemed to listen with pleasure to what I said. "Scipio (said he one day), if I had a lackey of thy humour, I should think myself in possession of a treasure; and if thou didst not belong to a man, for whom I have a regard, I would do my endeavour to debauch thee from his service." "Sir (said I), you would find it a very easy task, for I have an inclination to serve people of quality; that is my foible: I am charmed by their easy behaviour." "If that be the case (replied Don Manriquez), I will desire Señor Balthazar to consent to thy leaving him and coming into my service; I don't believe he will refuse me

that favour." Indeed, Velazquez granted it the more easily, as he did not think the loss of a roguish lackey irreparable: for my own part, I was glad of the change; the valet of a citizen appearing to me a mere beggar, in comparison to the lackey of a knight of Alcántara.

'To draw a faithful picture of my new patron, I must tell you, that he was a cavalier, endowed with a most amiable person, and with such sweetness of temper and cultivated understanding, as captivated everybody who knew him: besides he had a great deal of courage and probity, and wanted nothing but fortune. Being cadet of a family more illustrious than rich, he was obliged to subsist at the expense of an old aunt who lived at Toledo, and who loving him as her own son, took care to furnish him with what money he wanted; he went always handsomely dressed, and was perfectly well received everywhere. He visited the principal ladies of the city, and among others, the Marchioness de Almenara, a widow of seventy-two years of age; who, by her engaging behaviour and agreeable wit, allured the whole nobility of Córdova to her house. Men as well as women delighted in her conversation, and her family was styled "the polite company."

'My master, who was one of the most assiduous visitors of that lady, came home from her house, one evening, with an enlivened look that was not natural to him: upon which, I said, "Señor, you seem to be strangely elevated; may your faithful servant ask the cause? hath not something extraordinary happened?" The knight smiled at that question, and owned he was actually engrossed by a serious conversation which he had enjoyed with the Marchioness de Almenara. "I heartily wish (said I laughing), that the superannuated toast may have made a declaration of love to you." "Jesting apart (answered he), know, my friend, that I am really beloved by the Marchioness. 'Chevalier (said she to me), I know the smallness of your fortune, as well as the nobleness of your birth: I have an inclination for you, and am resolved to make you easy in your circumstances, by marrying you,

as I cannot decently make your fortune any other way. I know very well that this marriage will bring upon me the ridicule of the world; that scandal will be very busy at my expense; and that, in short, I shall pass for an old fool, who must needs have another husband. No matter, I intend to despise slander, in order to make you happy: all that I fear (added she) is that you may possibly have a reluctance to comply with my intentions.' This (continued the knight), is the subject of her discourse, which surprised me the more, as she is the most virtuous and prudent woman of Córdova; I answered, therefore, I was astonished she should do me the honour of offering me her hand; she who had always persisted in the resolution of preserving her widowhood to the last: to this she replied that, having a considerable estate, she should be glad in her lifetime, to share it with a man of honour whom she esteemed." "You are, then, I suppose (said I), determined to hazard the leap." "Canst thou doubt it? (he replied) the Marchioness possesses immense wealth, together with excellent qualities both of the heart and head: and I must have lost my judgement, indeed, if I rejected such an advantageous settlement."

'I very much approved of my master's design, to lay hold of this fair occasion to make his fortune, and even advised him to push matters, so much was I afraid to see her inclinations change. Luckily, the lady, who had the affair still more at heart than I had, gave such expeditious orders, that the preparations were soon made for her marriage. As soon as it was known at Córdova, that the old Marchioness de Almenara, was going to marry young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began to make themselves merry at the widow's expense; but in vain did they exhaust their stock of raillery, they could not divert her from her design; she let the whole city talk, and followed her knight to the altar: their nuptials were celebrated with such splendour as afforded new matter for scandal. "The bride (said they) might have, at least, for the

sake of decency, suppressed all noise and pomp, which but ill becomes old widows who marry young husbands.

'The Marchioness, instead of appearing ashamed of being, at her age, wife to the chevalier, indulged herself without constraint, in the joy which she felt on this occasion; she had a grand entertainment at her house, accompanied by a concert of music, and the feast ended in a ball, at which were present all the nobility of Córdova. Towards the end of the ball, our new married couple slipped off and met in an apartment, where being shut up with a waiting-woman and me, the Marchioness addressed herself to my master, in these words: "Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house; we will pass the night in separate chambers, and in the day we will live together, like mother and son." The knight was, at first, puzzled, and believed that the lady talked thus, only to engage him to offer soft violence to her delicacy; imagining, therefore, that he ought out of pure politeness, to act the passionate lover, he approached her, and eagerly endeavoured to serve her in quality of valet de chambre: but she, far from allowing him to undress her, pushed him away with a serious air, saying: "Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those amorous old widows who marry again out of frailty, you are deceived; I did not espouse you, to make you buy the advantages which you will reap from our contract of marriage; these are the pure offerings of my heart, and I exact nothing in return, but sentiments of friendship." So saying, she left my master and me in our apartment, and retired into her own, with her waiting-maid, absolutely forbidding the chevalier to follow her.

'After her retreat, we remained a good while, confounded at what we had heard. "Scipio (said my master), didst thou ever hear such a discourse as that of the Marchioness? What dost thou think of such a lady?" "I think, sir (answered I), that she has not her fellow; you are happy in having such a wife, which is like the possession of a benefice without cure

of souls." "As for my part (replied Don Manriquez), I admire a spouse of such an inestimable character, and I intend to compensate with all imaginable attention, the sacrifice which she makes to her delicacy." Having conversed some time about the lady, we went to rest; I upon a truckle-bed in a wardrobe, and my master in a fine bed prepared for him, where I believe, at bottom, he was not sorry to lie alone, and to be quit for his fear only.

'The rejoicings began again next day, and the new-married lady appeared in such good humour, as to afford scope to the ralliers. She was the first to laugh at what they said; nay, even excited others to laugh, by receiving their sallies with a good grace. The knight, for his part, seemed no less satisfied with his spouse; and by the tender glances with which he looked and spoke to her, one would have thought that old age was his taste: this happy couple had in the evening a new conversation, in which it was decided that, without disturbing one another, they should live for the future, in the same manner as before marriage: meanwhile I must do Don Manriquez the justice to say, that, out of consideration for his wife, he did what few husbands would have done in his place: he abandoned a girl in the city, whom he loved, and of whom he was beloved; being resolved (as he said) to maintain no commerce which would seem to insult the delicate conduct of his wife towards him.

'While he gave this old lady such strong marks of gratitude, she repaid them with usury, though she was ignorant of this behaviour, and made him master of her strong box, which was even better replenished than that of Velazquez: as she had retrenched her housekeeping during her widowhood, she put it again on the same footing, on which it had been in the life-time of her first husband, she increased the number of her servants, filled her stables with horses and mules; in a word, by her generosity, the chevalier, who was the poorest, became the richest knight of Alcántara. You will ask, perhaps, what I got by all this: I received

fifty pistoles from my mistress, and one hundred from my master, who, moreover, made me his secretary, with an appointment of five hundred crowns; he had even so much confidence in my integrity, that he created me his treasurer.'

'"His treasurer!" (cried I, interrupting Scipio with a loud laugh). "Yes, sir (he replied with a dry, serious look), no less than his treasurer; and I'll venture to say, that I acquitted myself in that employment with honour. True it is, I am perhaps somewhat indebted to cash; for, as I took my wages in advance, and quitted the knight's service suddenly, it is not impossible that I may now be in arrears: at any rate, it is the last reproach that I have deserved, having always acted with probity since that time.

'I was, therefore (continued the son of Coscolina), secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who seemed as well satisfied with me as I was with him; when he received a letter from Toledo, stating that his aunt, Doña Teodora Moscoso, was at the point of death. He set out instantly, to see that lady who had been a mother to him, for many years, and I accompanied him in this journey, together with a valet de chambre and one lackey. Being all mounted on the best horses in our stables, we soon got to Toledo, where we found Doña Teodora in such a condition as gave us hopes that she would not die of that distemper; and truly our prognostic, though contrary to that of an old physician who attended her, was verified by the event.

'While the health of our good aunt was re-establishing, less, perhaps, by the remedies she took than by the presence of her dear nephew; Mr. Treasurer passed his time as agreeably as he could, with young people whose acquaintance soon introduced him to occasions of spending his money. They sometimes carried me to the gambling-hells, where they engaged me in play; and as I was not so expert a gamester as my master, Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I conceived insensibly an inclination for play; and if I had entirely abandoned myself to that passion, it

would, doubtless, have compelled me to take from our cash, some quarters of my allowance in advance: but luckily, love saved both my own virtue and my master's money. One day, as I passed by the church *de los Reyes*[1], I perceived, through a lattice, the curtains of which were withdrawn, a young maid who seemed rather a divinity than a mortal. I would use a term still stronger, if there was any, to denote the impression which she made upon my heart. I made it my business to get information about her, and by dint of inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was waiting-maid to Doña Julia, second daughter of the Count de Polan.'

Beatrice interrupted Scipio with a loud laugh, then addressing herself to my wife, 'Beautiful Antonia (said she), pray look steadfastly at me. Don't you think I have the air of a divinity?' 'You had at that time in my eyes (said Scipio to her), and since I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me fairer than ever.' My secretary, after such a gallant repartee, pursued his history thus:

'This discovery quite inflamed me; not, indeed, with a legitimate ardour, for I imagined that I should easily triumph over her virtue, by presents capable of shaking it; but I judged amiss of the chaste Beatrice. In vain did I offer her (by means of mercenary women) my purse and affection; she rejected my proposals with disdain. Her resistance increased my desires. I had recourse to the last expedient, and offered my hand, which she accepted, when she knew that I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As we thought it convenient to conceal our marriage for some time, we were wedded privately in presence of Dame Lorenza Sephora, governess of Seraphina, and some other domestics belonging to the Count de Polan. As soon as I had married Beatrice, she facilitated the means of seeing and conversing with her at night in the garden, into which I introduced

[1] Built by Ferdinand and Isabella in thanksgiving for their victory at Toro (February 18, 1476).

myself by a little door, of which she gave me the key. Never were man and wife happier in one another than Beatrice and I. We waited with equal impatience for the hour of rendezvous, ran thither with equal eagerness; and the time which we spent together, though it was sometimes pretty long, seemed but a moment to both.

'One night, which was as fatal to me as the others had been propitious, I was surprised at entering the garden, to find the little door open. I was alarmed by this uncommon event, from whence I conceived a bad omen. I grew pale and trembled, as if I had foreseen what was to happen; and advancing in the dark towards an arbour where I used to converse with my wife, I heard the voice of a man. I stopped all of a sudden to listen, and my ear was immediately saluted with these words, "Don't let me languish, then, my dear Beatrice! Complete my happiness, and consider that your fortune is connected with it." Instead of having patience to hear him to an end, I thought there was no occasion for knowing more. A jealous fury took possession of my soul; and breathing nothing but vengeance, I drew my sword, and went hastily into the arbour. "Ah! cowardly seducer (cried I), whosoever thou art, thou shalt sooner deprive me of life, than rob me of my honour." So saying, I attacked the cavalier who was talking to Beatrice. He put himself immediately into a posture of defence, and fought like a man who understood the art much better than I, who had only received a few lessons at Córdova. Nevertheless, swordsman as he was, I made a push which he could not parry; or rather his foot slipped. I saw him fall; and imagining that I had wounded him mortally, fled as fast as my legs could carry me, without answering Beatrice, who called me.'

'Yes, really (said his wife, interrupting him), I called, in order to undeceive him. The cavalier with whom I conversed was no other than Don Fernando de Leyva. That nobleman, who loved my mistress

Julia, had formed the resolution of carrying her off by force, believing it impossible to obtain her by any other means; and I myself had given him a meeting in the garden, to concert with him the steps of that undertaking, on which he assured me my fortune depended; but in vain did I call my husband: he avoided me as a wife who had been unfaithful to him.'

'My situation at that time was such (resumed Scipio) as rendered me capable of committing anything. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, and to what extravagance it drives the soundest understandings, will not be surprised at the disorder which it produced in my weak brain. I underwent a momentary transition from one extreme to another. I felt the emotions of hatred succeed those of tenderness which I had entertained for my wife a moment before, and made an oath to abandon and banish her for ever from my memory. Besides, I thought I had killed a cavalier; and in that opinion, being afraid of falling into the hand of justice, suffered that inconceivable anxiety which incessantly pursues like a fury the man who has done a bad action. In this horrible situation, my whole care being to escape, I did not go home, but instantly quitted Toledo, having no other baggage than the clothes on my back. True, indeed, I had in my pocket sixty pistoles, which were a pretty good resource to a young man, who proposed to live all his life in service.

'I walked all night long, or rather ran; for the images of alguazils, which continually haunted my imagination, supplied me still with new vigour; and the morning surprised me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I arrived at this last town, finding myself a little fatigued, I went into the church as soon as it was open, and after having put up a short prayer, sat down upon a bench to rest me. I began to muse upon my present situation, which Heaven knows was perplexing enough; but I had not time to make long reflections. I heard the church echo with two or three smacks of a whip, which making me conclude

that a carrier was passing, I got up immediately to see whether or not I was mistaken; and by the time I got to the door, perceived one, who being mounted on a mule, led two more in a leash. "Stop friend (said I to him), where are these mules a-going?" "To Madrid (answered he). I came hither with two good Dominican monks, and am going back by myself."

'The opportunity that offered of travelling to Madrid, inspired me with an inclination to go thither. I made a bargain with the carrier, mounted one of his mules, and we pushed forwards for Illescas, where we were to sleep. Scarce had we got out of Maqueda, when the carrier, who was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age, thundered out church-singing with vast vociferation: he began with the prayers which the canons sing at matins, then sung the *Credo*, as it is sung at High Mass; and passing on to vespers, pronounced them, without even sparing the *Magnificat*. Although the rogue stunned me with his noise, I could not help laughing, and even encouraged him to continue, when he was obliged to stop and take breath. "Courage, friend (said I to him), pray go on: if heaven hath given you good lungs, I see you don't put them to a bad use." "No, indeed (cried he), I am not, thank God, like the most part of carriers, who sing nothing but infamous or impious songs; I would not even repeat ballads made upon our wars with the Moors: for these are things at least frivolous, if not wicked." "You have (said I) a purity of heart rarely to be met with among muleteers: with this extreme delicacy in the choice of your songs, have you likewise made a vow of chastity, with regard to the young wenches who live at inns upon the road?" "Certainly (answered he). Continence is another thing on which I pique myself in places of this sort, where I mind nothing but my mules." I was a little astonished to hear this phoenix of carriers talk in such a manner; and looking upon him as a man of honesty and discretion, entered into a conversation with him, after he had sung his fill.

'We arrived at Illescas in the twilight, where alighting at an inn, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went into the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to prepare a good supper. This he promised to do so effectually, that I should remember I had lodged at his house the longest day I had to live. "Ask (said he), ask your carrier what sort of a man I am. Ecod! I will defy all the cooks of Madrid and Toledo to make an *olla podrida* comparable to those that I compose. I will treat you this night with a ragout of rabbit dressed in my manner, and you shall see whether or not I have reason to boast of my skill." Thereupon, showing me a saucepan, wherein there was (as he said) a young rabbit already minced: "There (added he) is what I intend to give you. When I have once put in some pepper, salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I hope to serve you in a little time with a ragout worthy of a judge."

'The landlord, after having thus sounded his own praise, began to dress the supper; and while it was doing, I went into the hall, where finding a kind of couch, I lay down, to sleep off my fatigue, having had no rest the night before. In two hours the carrier waking me, said, "Master, your supper is ready; come, if you please, and sit down at table." There was one in another room, with two covers, at which my fellow-traveller and I sitting down, the ragout was served. I attacked it with a greedy appetite, and found it of an exquisite relish, whether hunger made me judge too favourably of it, or that my satisfaction was the effect of the cook's skill. We had also a plate of roast mutton; and I remarking that the carrier did honour to this last dish only, asked why he abstained from the other. He answered with a smile, that he did not love ragouts. This reply, or rather the smile with which it was accompanied, seeming to me mysterious, "You conceal (said I) the true reason that hinders you from eating the ragout; pray, do me the pleasure of letting me know it." "Since you are

so curious to know it (he replied), I will tell you, that I have loathed all these sorts of ragouts, since, in going once from Toledo to Cuenca, they brought me for supper at an inn a hashed cat instead of a rabbit, and that gave me a disgust at all fricassees."

'The carrier had no sooner spoken these words, than in spite of the hunger that devoured me, my appetite forsook me all of a sudden. I took it in my head that I had eaten of a pretended rabbit, and could no longer look at the ragout without making wry faces. My companion did not cure me of this conjecture, when he told me that it was a common thing among the innkeepers of Spain, as well as the pastrycooks, to substitute that *quid pro quo*. This discourse, you see, was very consoling; and therefore, I had not the least inclination to return to the ragout, nor even to touch the roast meat, lest the mutton might be as much sophisticated as the rabbit. I rose from table, cursing the ragout, the landlord and his inn; and lying down again upon my pallet, passed the rest of the night more quietly than I had expected. Next morning early, after having paid the landlord as handsomely as if I had been extremely well treated, I departed from Illescas, my imagination still so full of the ragout, that I fancied every animal which I saw was a cat.

'I arrived in good time at Madrid, where, as soon as I had satisfied my carrier, I hired a small room near the Sun Gate. Mine eyes, though accustomed to quality, were dazzled by the great concourse of noblemen, who usually appeared in the court end of the town. I admired the prodigious quantity of coaches, and the infinite number of gentlemen, pages, and lackeys who attended the great. My admiration redoubled, when going to the King's reception, I beheld that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I was charmed at the sight, and said within myself, "I am no longer surprised at what I have heard, that one cannot possibly conceive the magnificence of the Court of Madrid, without being an eyewitness of it.

I am overjoyed at my coming hither, where I foresee I shall be able to do something." All that I could perform, however, was to contract a few unprofitable acquaintances. I gradually spent all my money, and thought myself very lucky in having an opportunity of bestowing myself with all my merit upon a pedant of Salamanca, whom a family affair had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and with whom I grew acquainted by accident. I became his factotum; and when he returned to the university, followed him thither.

'The name of my new patron was Don Ignacio de Ipiña; he assumed the Don. because he had been preceptor to a Duke, who, by way of recompense, settled upon him a pension for life; he enjoyed another as *emeritus* professor of the college; and he drew yearly from the public a revenue of two or three hundred pistoles, by the books of dogmatical morality which he printed. The manner in which he composed his works well deserves honourable mention. He spent almost all the day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing upon small squares of paper each apothegm or brilliant thought which he met with. As these squares were filled, he employed me to string them upon wire, in form of a garland, and each garland made a volume. What a world of bad books did we compose! Every month almost we finished two volumes, and immediately the press groaned with them. What was most surprising, he published these his compilings as performances entirely new; and if the critics thought proper to upbraid him with having pillaged the ancients, he would answer with most haughty assurance, *Furto laetamur in ipso*[1].

[1] A quotation from Jean Baptiste Santeul, *Opera omnia* (Parisiis, 1729), ii, 120.

> Quin inscribendis semper magis apta triumphis,
> Roma lubens offert patrii sermonis honores.
> Arripite; (hoc furto vates laetamur in ipso)
> *Ausonidum spoliis Francos ornate triumphos.*

'He was also a great commentator; and there was so much erudition in his annotations that he frequently made remarks on things scarce worthy to be observed; and sometimes wrote upon his paper squares passages from Hesiod and other authors, very little to the purpose. That I improved my understanding in the service of this virtuoso it would be ungrateful in me to deny. I brought my handwriting to perfection, by dint of transcribing his works. And as in treating me like a pupil, rather than a valet, he took care to cultivate my capacity; he was also far from neglecting my morals. "Scipio (he would say, when he heard of any piece of knavery committed by a servant), beware, my child, of following the bad example of that rogue; a valet ought to serve his master with equal fidelity and zeal." In a word, Don Ignacio lost no occasion of inculcating virtue in me; and his exhortations had such a good effect, that I was never in the least tempted to play him a trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his house.

'I have already observed that Doctor de Ipiña was originally of Madrid, where he had a kinswoman called Catalina, chambermaid to the Prince's nurse. This waiting-maid, who is the same whom I since made use of to procure Señor de Santillana's enlargement from the tower of Segovia, being desirous of doing a good office for Don Ignacio, engaged her mistress to ask a benefice for him from the Duke of Lerma. That Minister granted him a nomination to the Archdeaconry of Granada, which being in a conquered country, is in the gift of the King. We set out for Madrid, as soon as we learned this piece of news, the Doctor intending to thank his benefactresses before his departure to Granada. I had more than one opportunity of seeing and speaking to Catalina, who was pleased with my easy air and gay disposition. For my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help making suitable returns to the little marks of friendship which she bestowed upon me.

In fine, we contracted a mutual attachment. Forgive this confession, my dear Beatrice; as I believed you false, that mistake ought to screen me from your reproaches.

'Meanwhile, Doctor Don Ignacio preparing for his departure to Granada, his relation and I, frightened at the separation that threatened us, had recourse to an expedient which preserved us from that misfortune. I feigned myself sick, complained of my head and breast, and affected all the symptoms of a a most violent distemper. My master called a physician, who having examined me with care, sincerely owned that my distemper was a very serious matter, and that in all likelihood I should keep my chamber a long time.

'The Doctor, impatient to be at his cathedral, did not think proper to delay his departure, but took another young man into his service, leaving me to the care of a nurse, with whom he deposited a sum of money, to defray the expense of my funeral if I should die, or to recompense my service if I should recover of my disease. As soon as I understood that Don Ignacio was gone, all my complaints vanished. I got out of bed, dismissed my physician who had so much penetration, and got rid of my nurse, who stole more than half of the money with which she had been entrusted in my behalf. While I acted this part, Catalina performed another with her mistress, Doña Anna de Guevara, whom, by persuading her that I was admirable in intrigues, she induced to choose me for one of her agents. Madam Nurse, whom her avarice always stimulated to new undertakings, having occasion for such people, received me into her family, and in a little time put my abilities to the proof. She gave me commissions which required some address; and without vanity, I did not acquit myself amiss. Wherefore, she was as well pleased with me, as I had cause to be dissatisfied with her. This lady was so covetous, that she would not allow me the least share of the fruits which she reaped from

my industry and trouble. She imagined that she acted with great generosity in paying my wages punctually. This excess of avarice would have soon induced me to quit her service, had I not been retained by the affection of Catalina, which kindling everyday more and more, she proposed, in a formal manner, that I should take her to wife.

'"Softly, my dear (said I), that ceremony can't be performed between us so soon. I must first be convinced of the death of a young woman who got the start of you, and to whom (for my sins) I am married." "Not you, indeed (replied Catalina), you only say so, to conceal in a polite manner the reluctance you have to wed me." In vain did I protest that I spoke the truth. She looked upon my sincere confession as a shift; and being offended at it, changed her behaviour towards me. We did not quarrel, but our correspondence visibly cooled, and we no longer retained for one another any other sentiments than those of decency and common regard.

'At this juncture I heard that Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, secretary to the Prime Minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a lackey; and this place flattered me the more, as it was represented the most agreeable one that I could possess. "Señor de Santillana (said people to me) is a person beloved by the Duke of Lerma, and of consequence cannot fail of pushing his fortune a great way: besides, he is very generous; so that in managing his affairs, you will effectually improve your own." I did not neglect this opportunity. I went immediately, and presented myself to Señor Gil Blas, for whom at first sight I felt a growing inclination, and who admitted me into his service on account of my physiognomy. I did not hesitate in quitting the nurse for him, and, if it please Heaven, he shall be my last master.'

Here Scipio finished his history; then addressing himself to me, 'Señor de Santillana (said he), pray witness for me to these ladies, that you have always

found me a zealous and faithful servant. I have need of your testimony to persuade them that the son of Coscolina has purged his morals, and that virtuous sentiments have succeeded his vicious inclinations.'

'Yes, ladies (said I), this is what I can answer for: if Scipio in his childhood was a real *pícaro*, he has corrected his conduct so well since that time, that he is now the model of a perfect servant. Far from having cause to blame his behaviour towards me, I must own that I lie under great obligations to him. The night on which I was apprehended, to be carried to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage, and secured a part of my effects, which he might have appropriated to himself with impunity. He not only preserved my money, but also, through pure friendship, came and shut himself up with me in prison, preferring the melancholy pleasure of sharing my sorrows to all the charms of liberty.'

THE END OF THE TENTH BOOK

# BOOK XI

## CHAPTER I

*Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy, which is disturbed by a melancholy event. Such changes happen at court as induce Santillana to go thither again*

I HAVE already observed, that there was great harmony between Antonia and Beatrice; the last being used to live like a submissive waiting-woman, and the other habituating herself to act the mistress. Scipio and I were husbands of too much gallantry, and too well beloved by our wives, to be long without children: they grew pregnant almost at the same time. Beatrice, who was the first delivered, brought into the world a girl; and a few days after, Antonia crowned my happiness, in bringing forth a boy. I sent my secretary to Valencia with this piece of news for the Governor, who came to Lirias with Seraphina, and the Marchioness de Pliego, to stand godmothers to the children, being pleased to add this token of affection to those I had already received. My son, whose godfather and godmother were that nobleman and the Marchioness, was christened Alphonso; and my lady governess, willing that I should have the honour of being doubly her gossip, stood with me for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

Not only the people of my family were rejoiced at the birth of my son. The inhabitants of Lirias likewise celebrated it by feasts, which showed that the whole village partook of their master's pleasure. But alas! our rejoicings were not of long duration: or rather, they were all of a sudden converted into

groans, wailings, and lamentations, by an event which more than twenty years have not been able to make me forget, and which will ever be present to my thoughts: my son died, and his mother, though safely delivered, soon followed him; a violent fever robbed me of my dear wife, fourteen months after we had been married. Let the reader conceive, if possible, the sorrow with which I was seized. I fell into a state of stupid dejection; and felt my loss so much, that I seemed quite insensible. I was in this condition five or six days, during which I would take no sustenance; and had it not been for Scipio, I believe I should either have let myself die of hunger, or have lost my reason entirely; but that dexterous secretary found means to beguile my grief, by conforming himself to it: he made me swallow broths, by the art of presenting them with such a mortified look, as if he gave them not so much with a view of preserving my life, as of nursing my affliction.

This affectionate servant, having written to Don Alphonso an account of my misfortune, and the deplorable situation in which I was, that tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, repaired immediately to Lirias. I cannot without being melted recall the moment in which he presented himself to my view: 'My dear Santillana! (said he, embracing me). I am not come hither to console you; I am come to mourn with you, for Antonia, as you would mourn with me, had fate robbed me of my Seraphina.' In effect, he shed tears and mingled his sighs with mine: so that, overwhelmed as I was with sorrow, I had a lively sense of Don Alphonso's goodness.

This Governor having had a long conference with Scipio, about the means of vanquishing my grief, they concluded that I must for some time be removed from Lirias, where everything recalled incessantly to my mind the image of my poor Antonia; upon this, Don Caesar's son proposed to carry me with him to Valencia, and my secretary seconded him so well,

that I yielded to his proposal. I left Scipio and his wife at my house, every part of which, indeed, served only to increase my affliction, and set out with the Governor. When I arrived at Valencia, Don Caesar and his daughter-in-law spared nothing to divert my chagrin; they entertained me by turns with all the amusements that seemed proper to dispel it; but in spite of all their endeavours, I continued, as much as ever, plunged in the most profound melancholy. It was not Scipio's fault, that I did not resume my tranquillity: he came often from Lirias to Valencia, to know how I was, and returned sad or gay, as he perceived me more or less disposed to receive consolation.

One morning, entering my chamber, 'Sir (said he with great emotion), there is a report in the city, which interests the whole kingdom; it is said that Philip III is no more[1], and that the Prince, his son, is now upon the throne; nay more (added he), that the Cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost his post[2], that he is even forbid the court, and that Don Gaspar de Guzman, Count de Olivares, is now Prime Minister.' I felt myself agitated by this piece of news, without knowing wherefore; and Scipio perceiving it, asked if I was anyhow affected by this great change. 'Why should it affect me, my child? (said I). I have quitted the court, and ought to look with indifference upon all the changes that can happen there.'

'For a man of your age (replied the son of Coscolina), you are very much detached from the world; were I in your place, I should have a longing desire to go to Madrid, and show my face to the young monarch, to see if he would remember me: this is a pleasure in which I would indulge myself.' 'I understand thee (said I); thou wouldst have me return to court, and try fortune anew, or rather to grow ambitious and covetous again.' 'Why should your morals

[1] Philip III died on March 31, 1621.

[2] The chronology is confused. Lerma fell in 1618, and was succeeded by Uceda: see Book XI, Chapter viii, p. 335, *n.*

be corrupted ? (answered Scipio). Have more confidence in your own virtue ; I will answer for your conduct ; the wholesome reflections which you made upon the court, during your disgrace, will screen you from the perils of it : re-embark boldly upon a sea, the shoals of which you are so well acquainted with.' ' Peace, flatterer (said I, interrupting him with a smile) ; art thou tired of seeing me lead a quiet life ? I thought thou hadst a greater regard for my repose.'

In this part of our conversation, Don Caesar and his son coming in, confirmed the news of the King's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune ; they, moreover, told me that this Minister having asked leave to retire to Rome, it was refused, and he was ordered to repair to his marquisate at Denia ; then, as if they had been in concert with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid, and present myself to the new King, since I was known to him, and had even done him such service as the great always recompense with pleasure. ' As for my part (said Don Alphonso), I don't doubt but he will be grateful, and that Philip IV will pay the debts of the Prince of Spain.' ' I am of the same opinion (said Don Caesar), and look upon Santillana's journey to court as an occasion for him to arrive at great preferment.'

' Truly, gentlemen (cried I), you don't consider what you say ; to hear you, one would think I had nothing to do but repair to Madrid, in order to have the golden key or some government conferred upon me : you are mistaken ; I am, on the contrary, persuaded that the King would take no notice of my person, were I to present myself to his view : I will do it, if you desire, in order to disabuse you.' The noblemen of Leyva took me at my word, and I could not help promising that I would immediately set out for Madrid. As soon as my secretary saw me determined on the journey, he felt an immoderate joy : he imagined that I should no sooner appear before the new monarch than that Prince would distinguish me in the crowd, and load me with honours and wealth : thereupon,

feeding his fancy with the most splendid chimeras, he raised me to the first offices of the State, and preferred himself by the help of my elevation.

I got ready, therefore, to return to court, not with a view of sacrificing again to fortune, but to satisfy Don Caesar and his son, who imagined that I should soon possess the favour of my sovereign. True it is I myself felt at bottom some desire of trying if the young Prince would know me again: attracted by this emotion of curiosity, without hope or design of reaping any advantage from the new reign, I departed with Scipio, for Madrid, leaving the care of my house to Beatrice, who was an excellent economist.

## CHAPTER II

*Gil Blas arrives at Madrid, and appears at court: the King remembers and recommends him to his Prime Minister. The consequence of that recommendation*

We reached Madrid in less than a week, Don Alphonso having accommodated us with two of his best horses, that we might make the greater dispatch; and we alighted at a furnished house where I lodged before, belonging to Vincent Forrero, my old landlord, who was very glad to see me again.

As this was a man who piqued himself upon knowing everything that happened, both at court and city, I asked if there was anything new. 'A great many things (answered he): since the death of Philip III, the friends and partisans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have bestirred themselves to maintain his Eminence in the Ministry; but their efforts have been ineffectual: the Count de Olivares has got the better of them all. It is said that Spain loses nothing by the change, and that the new Prime Minister has a genius of such vast extent, that he is able to govern the whole world: heaven preserve him! What is

certain (added he), is, that the people have conceived the highest opinion of his capacity; and we shall see in the end whether the Duke of Lerma is well or ill replaced.' Forrero having thus opened, gave me an account of all the changes which had been made at court, since the Count de Olivares steered the helm of the monarchy.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I went to court in the afternoon, and put myself in the King's way, as he went into his closet: but he did not look at me: I returned next day, to the same place, but was not more fortunate. The third time, he cast his eye upon me, as he passed, but seemed to take no notice of my person; whereupon I came to a determination, and said to Scipio, who accompanied me, 'Thou seest that the King does not remember me, or if he does, has no mind to renew the acquaintance: I believe it will not be amiss for us, to set out upon our return to Valencia.' 'Not so fast, sir (replied my secretary); you know better than I, that success at court is only to be obtained by patience; don't cease showing yourself to the Prince; by dint of perseverance in appearing before him, you will oblige him to consider you more attentively, and to recall the features of his agent with the fair Catalina.'

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I had the complaisance to continue the same conduct during three weeks; and one day, at length, the monarch, struck with my appearance, ordered me to be called in, and I entered his closet, not without great disorder, to find myself *tête-à-tête* with my Sovereign. 'Who are you? (said he). I remember your face, but cannot recollect where I have seen you.' 'Sir (answered I, trembling), I had the honour to conduct your Majesty, one night, with the Count de Lemos, to the house of——' 'Oh! I remember it (said the Prince, interrupting me), you were secretary to the Duke of Lerma, and if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillana. I have not forgot that you served me with abundance of zeal on the occasion, and that

you were very ill rewarded for your pains; were not you imprisoned for that adventure?' 'Yes, sir (said I), I was six months in the tower of Segovia, whence your goodness delivered me.' 'That (answered he) does not acquit me of the obligation; it is not enough to set you at liberty, I ought to recompense you for the misfortune which you suffered for love of me.'

Just as the Prince had pronounced these words, the Count de Olivares entered the closet. A favourite takes umbrage at everything: he was astonished to find a stranger there: and the King redoubled his surprise by saying to him: 'Count, I recommend this young man to you; employ him in some shape or other, and take care of his advancement.' The Minister affected to receive this order with a gracious look, eyeing me from head to foot, and very anxious to know who I was. 'Go, friend (said the monarch to me, making a sign for me to retire), the Count will not fail to employ you in an advantageous manner, both for my service and your own interest.'

I immediately quitted the closet, and rejoined the son of Coscolina, who, extremely impatient to know what the King had said to me, remained in the utmost agitation. He asked me forthwith, whether we must return to Valencia or stay at Court? 'Thou shalt judge' (said I): then I overwhelmed him with joy, by recounting to him, word for word, the short conversation which I had with the King. 'My dear master (said Scipio to me, when he heard it), will you distrust my almanacs again[1]? Confess that the Lords of Leyva and I were not to blame, in exhorting you to take a trip to Madrid. I already see you in some eminent post. You will become the Calderon of Count de Olivares.' 'That is not at all what I wish (said I, interrupting him); I have no ambition for a place which is environed with so many precipices. I would rather have an employment in which I should have no occasion to do injustice, or carry on a shameful

[1] *Prendrez-vous une autre fois de mes almanacs?* = Will you mistrust my forecasts another time?

traffic of my Prince's favours: after the use I made of my past credit, I cannot be too much upon my guard against avarice and ambition.' 'Come, sir (replied my secretary), the Minister will give you some good post, which you may fill without ceasing to be an honest man.'

More urged by Scipio than by my own superiority, I went next day to the house of Count de Olivares, before sunrise, having been informed that every morning, in summer and winter, he gave audience by candlelight. I modestly took my station in the corner of the hall, whence I narrowly observed the Count when he appeared; for I had but a superficial view of him in the King's closet. He was taller than the middle size, and might have passed for a fat man, in a country where we see none almost but lean people: his shoulders were so high, that I thought him hunchbacked, though he was not so: his head, which was extremely large, hung down upon his breast; his hair was black and straight, his visage long, his complexion of an olive colour, his mouth sunk in, and his chin peaked and turned upwards at the end.

All this together could not make a very handsome appearance; nevertheless, as I believed him to be well disposed towards me, I looked upon him with a favourable eye, and even found him agreeable. True it is, he treated everybody with an affable and pleasant air, and very graciously received the memorials which were presented to him: and this seemed to supply the place of a good person. Meanwhile, when I advanced in my turn to salute him, and make myself known, he darted a rude and threatening look at me; then turning his back, without deigning to hear me, returned into his closet. I now thought him more ugly than he was naturally, went out of the hall, very much confounded at such an unfavourable reception, and did not know what to think of the matter.

Having rejoined Scipio, who waited for me at the door, 'Dost thou know (said I) what reception I have met with?' 'No (answered he), but it is not

difficult to guess: the Minister, ready to conform himself to the pleasure of his Prince, has doubtless offered you some considerable employment.' 'There you are mistaken' (I replied), telling him at the same time in what manner I had been received. Having listened attentively, he said, 'The Count must have forgotten you, or mistaken you for somebody else; I advise you to wait on him again, and I am sure he will treat you with another sort of look.' I followed my secretary's advice, and presented myself the second time, before the Minister, who treated me still worse than at first, frowned at me, as if the sight of me had given him pain, turned his eyes another way, and retired without speaking one word.

I was touched to the quick by his behaviour, and tempted to depart immediately for Valencia: but this Scipio did not fail to oppose, being unwilling to renounce the hopes which he had conceived. 'Dost thou not see (said I to him) that the Count wants to remove me from court? The King has expressed to him some regard for me, and that is sufficient to bring upon me the aversion of his favourite; let us yield, my child, let us yield with a good grace to the power of such a formidable foe.' 'Sir (answered he, incensed against the Count de Olivares), I would not so easily quit my ground; I would go and complain to his Majesty of the little regard which the Minister shows to his recommendations.' 'Bad counsel, my friend (said I); if I should take that imprudent step, I would soon repent it; nay, I believe I run some risk in tarrying in this city.'

My secretary began to weigh these words, and considering that we had actually to do with a man who might make us revisit the tower of Segovia, he partook of my fear, and no longer opposed my desire of quitting Madrid, whence I resolved to move the very next day.

## CHAPTER III

*Gil Blas is hindered from executing his resolution to leave the court, and receives an important piece of service from Joseph Navarro*

On my return to my lodging, I met my old friend Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zúñiga. I went up to him, saluted him, and asked if he knew me, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. 'You confess, then (said he), that you have not used me extremely well?" 'Yes (answered I); and you have a right to load me with reproaches: I deserve them all, if I have not already expiated my crime by the remorse which attended it.' 'Since you have repented of your fault (replied Navarro, embracing me), I ought no longer to remember it.' I, on my part, hugged Joseph in my arms; and we resumed our former sentiments for each other.

He had heard of my imprisonment, and the disorder of my affairs, but was ignorant of what followed. I informed him of all, and even recounted to him the conversation I had with the King, not concealing the bad reception I had met with from the Minister, no more than my design of retiring again to my solitude. 'Beware of going thither (said he), since our monarch has expressed a friendship for you: it must certainly be of some service. Between you and me, the Count de Olivares has a very singular disposition, and is full of whims: he sometimes, as on this occasion, acts in a very unaccountable manner; and nobody but himself has the key of his irregular behaviour. Finally, whatever reasons he may have for receiving you in this manner, stick close to the business; he will not hinder you from profiting by the Prince's bounty; this is what I assure you: I will mention it this evening to Señor Don Balthazar de Zúñiga, my master, who is uncle to the Count de Olivares, and shares with him

the cares of Government.' Navarro having told me this, asked a direction to my lodging: and so we parted.

It was not long before I saw him again. Coming to me next day, 'Señor de Santillana (said he), you have a protector in my master, who will favour you with his support. On account of the good character which I gave of you, he has promised to speak in your behalf to his nephew, the Count de Olivares, whom I hope he will prepossess in your favour.' My friend Navarro, who did not serve me by halves, introduced me two days after to Don Balthazar, who said to me with a courteous look, 'Señor de Santillana, your friend Joseph has spoken so well of you as to engage me in your interests.' I made a profound bow to Señor de Zúñiga; and answered that I should all my life have a lively sense of the obligation I lay under to Navarro, for having procured for me the protection of a Minister who was justly styled 'the light of the Council.' Don Balthazar, at this flattering reply, clapped me on the shoulder, saying with a smile, 'You may go again to-morrow to the reception of the Count de Olivares, with whom you will be better satisfied than before.'

I appeared, therefore, the third time before the Prime Minister; who, having distinguished me in the crowd, honoured me with a smiling look, from whence I conceived a good omen. 'This goes well (said I to myself): the uncle has made the nephew hear reason.' I now expected a favourable reception; and my expectation was fulfilled: the Count, after having given audience to everybody, sent for me to his closet, where he said to me, with a familiar air, 'Friend Santillana, forgive me for having thrown thee into perplexity, for my diversion; I pleased myself with giving thee uneasiness, in order to try thy prudence, and see what thou wouldst do in thy chagrin. I don't doubt that thou thoughtest I was displeased with thee; but, on the contrary, my child, I own I have a liking to thy person. Though the King, my

master, had not ordered me to take care of thy fortune, I should have done it through pure inclination. Besides, my uncle, Don Balthazar de Zúñiga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has desired me to look upon thee as one for whom he interests himself: this is enough to determine me in thy favour.' This declaration made such a strong impression upon my senses, that they were quite disordered. I threw myself at the feet of the Minister, who having bid me rise, went on in this manner: 'Come hither again this afternoon, and call for my steward, who will impart to thee the orders I shall give him.' So saying, his Excellency went out to hear Mass, as he usually did every day, after having given audience; and then repaired to the King's *lever*.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Gil Blas acquires the love of Count de Olivares*

I DID not fail to return in the afternoon, and call for the steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. I no sooner told him my name, than, saluting me with great demonstrations of respect, 'Señor (said he), follow me, if you please: I will conduct you to the apartment which is destined for you in this house.' So saying, he carried me by a little stair to a range of five or six rooms, which composed the second story of one wing of the house, and which were very plainly furnished. 'This (said he) is the lodging which his Grace appoints for you; and here you will have a table with six covers, maintained at his expense. You will be served by his own domestics, and there will always be a coach at your command. This is not all (added he), his Excellency has ordered me to treat you with the same respect, as if you were of the family of Guzman.' 'What the deuce is the meaning of all this (said I to myself)? How am I to understand these distinctions? Is there not some mischief

at bottom ? and is it not for his diversion that the Minister gives me such honourable treatment ?' While I was in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came and told me, that the Count wanted me. I went instantly to his Grace, who being alone in his closet, 'Well, Santillana (said he), art thou satisfied with thy apartment, and the orders which I have given to Don Raymond ?' 'The goodness of Your Excellency (answered I) seems to me excessive ; and I receive it with fear and trembling.' 'For what reason (said he) ? Can I do too much honour to a man whom the King has recommended to my care ? No, indeed ; I do no more than my duty in treating thee in an honourable manner : be not, therefore, surprised at what I do for thee ; and be assured that a solid and splendid fortune cannot escape thee, provided thou art as much attached to me as thou wast to the Duke of Lerma. But with regard to that nobleman (added he), I have been told that you lived in great familiarity with him. I am curious to know how you two became acquainted, and what employment you exercised under that Minister : disguise nothing : I insist upon hearing the whole truth.' I then remembered my perplexity with the Duke of Lerma, in the same case, and in what manner I extricated myself : and this I practised again very successfully ; that is to say, in my narration I softened the rough places, and passed slightly over those things which did not much redound to my honour : I likewise spared the Duke of Lerma ; though in doing otherwise I should have better pleased my hearer. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderon, I gave him no quarter, but disclosed all the fine strokes which I knew he struck in the traffic of commanderies, governments, and benefices.

'What you tell me of Calderon (said the Minister, interrupting me) is conformable to several memorials which have been presented against him, and which contain heads of accusation still more important. His trial will soon come on ; and if you wish his down-

fall, I believe your desire will be satisfied.' 'I don't desire his death[1] (said I), though it was not his fault, that I found not mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my being imprisoned for a good many months.' 'How! (cried his Excellency) was Don Rodrigo the cause of thy imprisonment? this is what I did not know. Don Balthazar, to whom Navarro recounted thy history, told me that the late King ordered thee to be confined, as a punishment for having carried the Prince of Spain to a suspected place, in the night; but I knew no more of the matter; and I can't conceive what part Calderon could play in the piece.' 'The part of a lover who revenges an injury received' (answered I). I then told him the whole adventure, which he thought so diverting, that, grave as he was, he could not help laughing, or rather weeping with mirth. He was infinitely amused at Catalina, sometimes niece and sometimes granddaughter, as well as at the part which the Duke of Lerma had acted in the affair.

When I had finished my narration, the Count dismissed me, saying, that he would not fail to find me some employment next day. I ran immediately to Zúñiga's house, to thank Don Balthazar for his good offices, and to tell my friend Joseph how well I was with the Prime Minister.

## CHAPTER V

*The private conversation which Gil Blas had with Navarro, and the first business in which he was employed by the Count de Olivares*

As soon as I saw Joseph, I told him with some agitation that I had a great many things to communicate: upon which, he carried me to a private place; where,

[1] Rodrigo Calderon was arrested at Valladolid on February 20, 1619: he was executed at Madrid on October 21, 1621.

after having informed him of what had happened, I asked his opinion of the matter. 'My opinion (answered he) is, that you are in the way of making a vast fortune: everything smiles upon you: you are agreeable to the Prime Minister; and another thing which may turn out to your advantage is, that I can do you the same service which you received from my uncle Melchor de la Ronda, when you first entered the family of the Archbishop of Granada. He spared you the trouble of studying the prelate and his principal officers, by disclosing their different characters to you at once; and I will, after his example, make you acquainted with the Count, the Countess his wife, and Doña Maria de Guzman their only child.'

'The Minister has a quick, penetrating genius, capable of forming grand designs. He sets up for a universal man, because he has a small tincture of every science, and believes himself able to decide in everything. He imagines himself a profound lawyer, a great captain, and a most consummate politician. Add to this, he is so intoxicated with his own opinions, that he always follows them, rather than those of others, that he may not seem beholden to the understanding of any man. Between you and me, this defect may have strange consequences, from which Heaven protect the monarchy. He shines in the council by a natural eloquence; and he would write as well as he speaks, if, in order to dignify his style, he did not affect expressions which render it stiff and obscure. He is, besides, very whimsical, capricious, and chimerical. So much for his head. As to his heart, he is generous and friendly. He is said to be vindictive: but what Spaniard is otherwise? He is also accused of ingratitude, in being the occasion of exiling the Duke of Uceda and the friar Luis Aliaga[1]; to whom, people say, he had great obligations: but this is pardonable; the desire of being Prime Minister prevails over every other sentiment.

'Doña Agnes de Zúñiga y Velasco, Countess de

[1] See Book XI, Chapter viii, p. 335, *nn.* 1 and 2.

Olivares (continued Joseph), is a lady who has no fault that I know, but that of selling her favours at a high price. As for Doña Maria de Guzman, who is, without contradiction, this day the richest match in Spain; she is an accomplished young lady, and the idol of her father: model your behaviour accordingly: be assiduous in making your court to these two ladies, and appear still more devoted to the Count de Olivares than you were to the Duke of Lerma, before your journey to Segovia; in which case, you will certainly become a personage of rank and power.

'I likewise advise you (added he) to wait upon my master, Don Balthazar, from time to time; though you have no need of him for your advancement, don't neglect him: he has a very good opinion of you at present; preserve his friendship and esteem, which may be of service to you upon some occasion or other.' 'As the uncle and nephew (said I) are both concerned in the ministry, is there no jealousy between the two colleagues?' 'On the contrary (answered he), they live together in the greatest harmony[1]. Had it not been for Don Balthazar, the Count de Olivares, perhaps, would not have been Prime Minister: for, in short, after the death of Philip III, all the friends and partisans of the house of Sandoval[2] exerted themselves very much; some in favour of the Cardinal, and others in behalf of his son: but my master, who was the most subtle among the courtiers, and the Count as cunning as he, broke all their measures, and took such effectual steps to secure that place, that their antagonists were quite foiled. The Count de Olivares, when he became Minister, shared the administration with his uncle, Don Balthazar, to whom he left the care of sovereign affairs, reserving all domestic concerns to himself: so that, by these means strengthening the ties of friendship which ought naturally to unite persons of the same blood, these two noblemen, independent

[1] Their partnership did not last long, however, for Balthazar de Zúñiga died in 1622.

[2] Sandoval was Lerma's family name.

of one another, live in such good correspondence, as to me seems unalterable.'

Such was the conversation I had with Joseph; by whose information I hoped to profit: after which, I went to thank Señor de Zúñiga for his goodness towards me. He told me very politely that he would seize every occasion of befriending me; and that he was very glad to find me satisfied with his nephew; to whom, he assured me, he would speak again in my favour: resolving at least (he said) to convince me that he had my welfare at heart; and that, instead of one patron, I had two. It was thus that Don Balthazar, out of friendship for Navarro, interested himself in my behalf.

That very evening I quitted my hired room, to go and lodge at the Prime Minister's house, where I supped with Scipio, in my own apartment. There we were served by the domestics of the family, who, while we ate our victuals with an affected gravity, laughed, perhaps, within themselves, at the respect which they were commanded to show. When the table was uncovered, and they were retired, my secretary, laying aside his constraint, said a thousand diverting things, which his gay disposition and sanguine hopes inspired. As for me, although overjoyed at the brilliant situation in which I saw myself, I felt myself no longer disposed to be dazzled by it: but, going to bed, slept soundly, without giving way to the agreeable ideas with which I might have entertained my fancy; whereas the ambitious Scipio enjoyed little repose, but passed the half of the night in hoarding up money for the portion of his daughter Seraphina.

I had scarce got on my clothes next morning, when I was sent for by his Grace; who, when I came before him, said to me, 'Well, Santillana, let us see a specimen of what thou canst do: thou sayest the Duke of Lerma employed thee in abridging memorials: I have got one, which I intend for thy first essay. The subject of it is this: it must be a performance to pre-

possess the public in favour of my ministry. I have already privately spread a report that I found affairs in very great disorder: the business, therefore, is to expose to the eyes of both Court and city the miserable condition to which the monarchy is reduced. We must, on this subject, draw a picture which will strike the people, and hinder them from regretting the loss of my predecessor. After that, you must extol the measures which I have taken to render his Majesty's reign glorious, his dominions flourishing, and his subjects perfectly happy.'

His Grace having spoke in this manner, gave me a paper, containing the just causes the nation had to complain of the preceding Administration, summed up in ten articles, the least of which, I remember, was sufficient to alarm all good Spaniards: then shutting me in a closet adjoining to his own, he left me to work at liberty. I began to compose my memorial as well as I could: I first of all described the bad condition of the kingdom, the finances exhausted, the royal revenue engrossed by partisans, and the marine entirely ruined. I then demonstrated the faults committed by those who had governed the State, under the last reign, and the terrible consequences which might proceed from these faults. In short, I represented the monarchy in danger, and so sharply censured the former Minister, that, according to my memorial, the loss of the Duke of Lerma was a great happiness for Spain. To say the truth, though I harboured no resentment against that nobleman, I was not sorry to do him this good office. Such is the disposition of man!

In fine, after a frightful picture of the misfortunes which threatened Spain, I encouraged the minds of people by making them conceive fair hopes of the future. I made the Count de Olivares speak like a saviour sent from heaven, for the salvation of the State: I promised mountains and miracles: in a word, I entered so well into the views of the new minister, that he seemed surprised at my performance; which,

when he had read to an end, 'Santillana (said he), dost thou know that thou hast composed a morsel worthy of a Secretary of State? I am not surprised that the Duke of Lerma employed thy pen; thy style is concise, and even elegant; but I think it is a little too natural.' He then pointed out the places which were not to his taste, altering them with his own hand; and I perceived, by his corrections, that he loved (as Navarro had told me) obscure and far-fetched expressions. Nevertheless, though he was resolved to have nobleness, or rather conceits, in his diction, he preserved two-thirds of my work: and, to show how well he was satisfied with my capacity, sent to me, by Don Raymond, three hundred pistoles, as a dessert at dinner.

## CHAPTER VI

*The use to which Gil Blas put his three hundred pistoles; and his charge to Scipio: with the success of the above-mentioned memorial*

This favour of the Minister furnished Scipio with a new opportunity of congratulating my return to Court. 'You see (said he) that fortune has great designs in your favour. Are you now sorry for having quitted your solitude? Long life to the Count de Olivares! He is quite another sort of a patron than his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, though you were so much attached to him, let you languish several months, without giving you one pistole; whereas, the Count has already bestowed upon you a gratification, which you could not have expected till after long service.

'I wish (added he) that the Lords of Leyva were witnesses of the happiness which you enjoy, or at least made acquainted with it.' 'It is time, indeed, for them to know it (answered I), and I was just going to talk to thee about the matter. I don't doubt that

they are extremely impatient to hear from me; but I waited until I should see myself settled in some shape or other, and be able to inform them positively, whether or not I should stay at Court. Now that I am fixed, thou mayst set out for Valencia when thou wilt, to inform those noblemen of my present situation, which I look upon as their own work, since it is certain, that, had it not been for them, I should never have determined upon my journey to Madrid.' 'My dear master (cried the son of Coscolina), how happy will they be, when I recount to them what has happened to you! Would I were already at the gates of Valencia! but I shall be there very soon: Don Alphonso's two horses are ready: I will set out immediately with one of his Grace's lackeys; for, besides that I shall be glad of a companion on the road, you know people will be dazzled by the livery of the Prime Minister.'

I could not help laughing at the ridiculous vanity of my secretary; though vainer still, perhaps, than he, I let him do as he desired. 'Go (said I), and return as soon as possible; for I have another commission to give thee: thou must go to Asturias with money for my mother: I have, through negligence, let the time pass, on which I promised to remit a hundred pistoles to her, and which thou didst undertake to deliver with thy own hand. These sorts of promises from a son ought to be so sacred that I upbraid myself with my want of punctuality.' 'Sir (answered Scipio), in six weeks I will bring you an account of both these commissions; I will converse with the Lords of Leyva, make a tour to your country-house, and revisit the city of Oviedo, which I never remember, without wishing three-fourths and a half of its inhabitants at the devil.' Upon this, I counted out to the son of Coscolina one hundred pistoles for my mother's pension, with a hundred more for himself, that he might agreeably perform the long journey which he had undertaken.

A few days after his departure the Count sent

our memorial to the press; and it was no sooner published, than it became the subject of all conversation in Madrid. The people, always pleased with any novelty, were charmed with the performance; the low ebb of the finances, which was painted in lively colours, incensed them against the Duke of Lerma; and if the strokes of the quill, which that Minister received, were not applauded by everybody, at least they met with abundance of approbation.

As for the magnificent promises made by the Count de Olivares, and, among others, that of defraying the national expense, by a prudent economy, without incommoding the subjects; they dazzled the citizens in general, and confirmed them in the grand opinion which they had already entertained of his capacity: so that the whole city echoed with his praise.

That Minister, overjoyed to see the accomplishment of his aim, which in that book had been to acquire the public affection, was resolved to deserve it effectually, by a commendable action, which should be serviceable to the King. For this purpose he had recourse to the invention of the Emperor Galba; that is, to make those who had enriched themselves, the Lord knows how, in the administration of the finances, regorge their wealth. When he had drawn from those leeches the blood which they had sucked, and filled the coffers of the King, he undertook to preserve it, by suppressing all pensions, not even excepting his own, as well as the gratifications that were given out of the King's exchequer. To succeed in this design, which he could not execute without changing the face of Government, he employed me in composing a new memorial, the substance and form of which he dictated. He then enjoined me to rise, as much as I could, above the ordinary simplicity of my style, and give more dignity to my expressions. 'Enough, my lord (said I), your Excellency shall have, as you desire, splendour wedded to sublimity.' I shut myself up in the same closet where I had composed the first, and there went to work, after having

invoked the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Granada.

I began by representing that we could not be too careful in preserving the money which was in the treasury, and which ought to be employed only in the emergencies of the State, as being a sacred fund, reserved on purpose to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I demonstrated to the King (for the memorial was addressed to him), that in taking away all the pensions and gratifications with which the revenue was saddled, he should not, for all that, deprive himself of the pleasure of rewarding those subjects who should deserve his favour; since, without touching his treasure, he was in a condition to bestow upon them great recompenses: that for some, he had vice-royalties, governments, orders of knighthood, and military employments; for others, commanderies, and pensions upon them, titles, magistracies; and, in fine, all sorts of benefices for those who are consecrated to the Church.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, took me up near three days; and, luckily, I composed it to the taste of my master; who, finding it written with emphasis and stuffed with metaphors, loaded me with applause. 'I am very well satisfied with this (said he, pointing to the most tumid places), these are well-stamped expressions. Courage, friend; I foresee that thou wilt be of great service to me.' Nevertheless, in spite of the applause of which he was so prodigal, he did not fail to retouch the memorial. He inserted a good deal of his own, and composed a piece of eloquence which charmed the King and the whole Court. The city joined its approbation, conceived a happy omen of the future, and flattered itself that the monarchy would resume its ancient lustre under the ministry of such a man.

His Excellency, seeing that this piece did him a great deal of honour, was willing that I should reap some fruit from it, in consideration of my share in the composition: he accordingly bestowed upon me a

pension of five hundred crowns upon the commandery of Castile; which was the more agreeable to me, as it was not wickedly, though easily, got.

## CHAPTER VII

*By what accident, in what place and condition, Gil Blas found his friend Fabricio; and the conversation that happened between them*

NOTHING gave more pleasure to the Count, than to know the opinion which the people of Madrid had of his conduct in the Ministry. He asked everyday, what people said of him; and even maintained spies, who brought him an exact account of what passed in the city. They reported to him every word which they heard; and as he ordered them to be sincere, his self-love suffered sometimes; for the people have an intemperance of tongue which has no respect of persons.

When I perceived that he was pleased with these reports, I employed myself every afternoon in going to public places, and joining conversation with good company. When they spoke of the Government, I listened with attention; and if they said anything that deserved to be retold to his Excellency, I did not fail to inform him of it: but it must be observed, that I never reported anything which was spoke to his prejudice.

One day, as I returned from one of these places, passing by the door of a hospital, I felt an inclination to enter. I walked through two or three wards full of sick people a-bed, and surveyed everything around me. Among these unfortunate people, whom I could not behold without compassion, I was struck with the appearance of one, who, I believed, was my old friend and comrade Fabricio. That I might have a more distinct view of him, I approached his bed; and having no longer any reason to doubt that it was

the poet Nuñez, stopped a few minutes to consider him, without speaking; while he, recollecting me also, eyed me in the same manner. At length, breaking silence, 'Sure (said I) my eyes deceive me! is this actually Fabricio whom I meet in this place?' 'The very same (answered he coldly): and thou hast no cause to be surprised at it. Since I left thee, I have ever exercised the business of an author: I have composed romances, comedies, all kinds of works of genius. I have run my race, and am now at the hospital[1].'

I could not help laughing at these words, and still more at the serious air with which they were pronounced. 'How! (cried I) has thy muse brought thee to this place? Hath she played thee this villainous trick?' 'Thou seest it is so (he replied): this house is the retreat of many a wit. Thou hast done well, my child, to take another road; but, methinks, thou art no longer at court, and the face of thy affairs is changed: nay, I remember to have heard, that thou wast imprisoned by order of the King.' 'True (said I), the charming situation in which I was, when we parted, in a little time after was followed by a reverse of fortune, which robbed me of my wealth and liberty: nevertheless, my friend, thou seest me again in a more flourishing state than ever.' 'That is impossible (cried Nuñez), thy apparel is frugal and plain; and thou hast not that vain and insolent air which prosperity usually gives.' 'Misfortune (answered I) hath purified my virtue; and I have learned in the school of adversity to enjoy riches with moderation.'

'Tell me then (cried Fabricio, starting up in a transport), what may be thy employment? what business dost thou follow? art thou not steward to some ruined grandee, or opulent widow?' 'I have a better post (I replied); but thou must dispense with my telling thee more at present: I will satisfy thy curiosity another time: I will now only let thee know, that I am in a condition to assist thee, or rather, to

[1] See Book X, Chapter i, p. 215, *n.*

make thee easy for life, provided thou wilt promise to write no more works of genius, either in verse or prose. Dost thou feel thyself capable of making such a sacrifice to me?' 'I have already made it to Heaven (said he), during a severe distemper of which I am just cured. A Dominican father has made me abjure poetry, as an amusement which, if not criminal, at least diverts the mind from the pursuit of wisdom and virtue.'

'I congratulate thee, my dear Nuñez (answered I): but beware of a relapse.' 'That I am in no fear of (he resumed): I am firmly resolved to abandon the muses: and when thou camest into the ward, was just composing an eternal adieu to them in verse.' 'Mr. Fabricio (said I, shaking my head), I don't know if the Dominican and I dare trust to your abjuration, you seem so furiously enchanted by these learned damsels.' 'No, no (answered he), I have broken off all connexion with them; nay, more: I have conceived an aversion for the public, which does not deserve that authors should consecrate their works to it: I should be sorry if I could produce anything that would please it. Don't imagine (continued he) that this language is dictated by passion: I speak in cold blood. I equally despise the applause and hisses of the public, which one does not know how to manage. It is so capricious, that it does not think two days one way. What fools are those dramatic writers who are vain of the success of their performances! Whatever noise they make by their novelty, if they are brought upon the stage twenty years after, they are for the most part very ill received. The present generation taxes the past with want of taste, and its determinations are contradicted by those of the next. From whence I concluded that those authors who are now applauded will be hissed by posterity. It is the same thing with regard to romances, and other amusing books, which, though at first they meet with general approbation, insensibly sink into contempt. That honour, therefore, which we reap from

the good success of our works, is nothing but a mere chimera, an illusion of the brain, a fire of straw which evaporates in smoke.'

Though I was well convinced that the Asturian poet spoke this from passion only, I did not seem to perceive it; but said to him, 'I am overjoyed to find thee disgusted with *bel esprit*, and radically cured of the rage of writing. Be assured that I will immediately procure for thee an employment in which thou mayst enrich thyself, without being at a great expense of genius.' 'So much the better! (cried he). Genius stinks in my nostrils, and I now look upon it as the most fatal present that Heaven can bestow upon man.' 'I wish, my dear Fabricio (I replied), that thou mayst still preserve these sentiments. If you persist in your resolution to quit poetry, I repeat it, I will soon procure for thee an honourable and lucrative post; but until I can do thee this service (added I, giving him a purse of sixty pistoles), pray accept of this small token of my friendship.'

'O generous friend! (cried the son of Barber Nuñez, transported with gratitude and joy). What thanks do I owe to Heaven for bringing thee into this hospital, which I will leave this very day, by thy assistance!' And he actually ordered himself to be transported into a hired lodging. But, before we parted, I told him where I lived, and invited him to come and see me, as soon as he should be perfectly recovered. He seemed extremely surprised when I told him that I lodged in the house of the Count de Olivares. 'Thrice happy Gil Blas! (said he), whose fate it is to be a Minister's favourite! I rejoice at thy good fortune, since thou usest it so well.'

## CHAPTER VIII

*Gil Blas becomes more and more beloved by his master. Scipio returns to Madrid, and gives an account of his journey to Santillana.*

The Count de Olivares, whom henceforth I shall call the Count-Duke, because the King was pleased about this time to honour him with that title, had a foible which I discovered, very much to my own advantage, and this was a desire of being beloved. As soon as he perceived that anyone attached himself to him through inclination, he immediately conceived a friendship for that adherent.

I took care not to neglect this observation. I was not contented with barely doing what he commanded. I executed his orders with such demonstrations of zeal, as quite won his heart. I studied his taste in all things, that I might conform myself to it; and anticipated his desires as much as I could.

By this conduct, which seldom fails of success, I insensibly became the favourite of my master, who on his part, as I myself had the same foible, gained my whole soul, by the marks of affection which he bestowed upon me; and I insinuated myself so far into his favour, that I at length shared his confidence with Señor Carnero, his chief secretary.

Carnero had practised the same method of being agreeable to his Excellency, and succeeded so well, that he was entrusted with the mysteries of the Cabinet. That secretary and I were the two confidants of the Prime Minister, and the depositaries of his secrets; with this difference, that he spoke to Carnero of nothing but State affairs, and conversed with me on his own private concerns only; by these means making as it were two separate departments, with which we were both equally satisfied, we lived together without jealousy, as without friendship. I had cause to be pleased with my situation, which

giving me continual opportunities of being with the Count-Duke, I was always at hand to observe the very bottom of his soul, which he, though naturally dissembling, ceased to conceal from me, when he no longer doubted the sincerity of my attachment.

'Santillana (said he to me one day), thou hast seen the Duke of Lerma enjoy an authority, which looked more like the power of an absolute monarch, than that of a favourite Minister: nevertheless, I am still more lucky than he was, even at the highest point of his fortune. He had two formidable enemies in the Duke of Uceda his own son[1], and in the confessor of Philip III[2]. Whereas, I see not one person near the King, who has credit enough to hurt me, nor even one whom I suspect to be my foe.'

'It is true, indeed (continued he), that when I came to the ministry, I suffered none to be near the Prince, but those who were connected with me, either by blood or friendship. I have by vice-royalties or embassies got rid of all those noblemen who by their personal merit might have acquired some portion of my Sovereign's favour, which I was resolved entirely to possess: so that I may now safely say, no great man takes umbrage at my credit. Thou seest, Gil Blas (added he), that I disclose my heart to thee. As I have reason to think thee entirely devoted to me, I have chosen thee for my confidant. Thou dost not want understanding; art (I believe) modest, prudent, and discreet; in a word, thou seemest proper for executing twenty sorts of commissions, which

[1] Cristóbal de Sandoval, Duke of Uceda, was the figure-head of the intrigue organized against Lerma by Olivares and Zúñiga. Uceda succeeded his father on October 3, 1618; he was dismissed on April 22, 1621, and died at Alcalá de Henares on May 31, 1624.

[2] The confessor was Aliaga: see Book IX, Chapter vii, p. 194, *n.* His chief allies in the cabal against Lerma were the Queen, Madre Mariana de San José (the Mother Abbess of the Convent of the Incarnation at Madrid), Uceda, and the Franciscan Juan de Santa Maria.

require a young man of extensive understanding, who is at the same time in my interests.'

I was not proof against the flattering images which these words raised in my imagination. Some vapours of avarice and ambition mounted into my brain, and awaked in me those sentiments over which I thought I had gained a complete triumph. I protested to the Minister that I would answer his intentions with all my power; and I kept myself ready to execute, without scruple, all the commissions with which he should think proper to entrust me.

While I was thus disposed to raise new altars to fortune, Scipio returning from his journey, said, 'I have not a tedious narration to make. The Lords of Leyva were charmed when I told them the reception you met with from the King, when he knew you, and with the behaviour of the Count de Olivares.'

Here I interrupted Scipio, saying, 'You would have given them still more pleasure, my friend, could you have told them on what footing I am now with his Grace. The rapidity of the progress which I have made in his Excellency's heart since thy departure is altogether prodigious.' 'God be praised! my dear master (answered he). I foresee that a splendid destiny awaits us.' 'Let us waive this subject said I), and talk of Oviedo. Thou hast been at Asturias; in what condition didst thou leave my mother?' 'Ah, sir! (he replied, assuming all of a sudden a melancholy look) I have nothing but afflicting news for you from that quarter.' 'O Heaven! (cried I) my mother is certainly dead.' 'Six months ago (said my secretary) the good lady paid the tribute of Nature, as well as your uncle, Señor Gil Perez.'

I was deeply affected with my mother's death, although in my infancy I had never received from her those caresses which are necessary to make children grateful in the sequel. I likewise paid those tears which I owed to the good Canon, for the care he had

of my education. My grief, indeed, did not last long, but soon mellowed into a tender remembrance which I have always preserved of my parents.

## CHAPTER IX

*How and to whom the Count-Duke married his only daughter, with the bitter fruits which that marriage produced.*

Soon after the return of Coscolina's son, the Count-Duke fell into a profound reverie, in which he remained for the space of eight whole days. I imagined that he was meditating some great stroke of politics; but the subject of his musing regarded his own family only. 'Gil Blas (said he to me one afternoon), thou must have perceived that I am a good deal perplexed in mind. Yes, my child, I am wholly engrossed by an affair upon which the repose of my life depends; and I will impart the secret to thee.

'Doña Maria, my daughter (continued he), is now marriageable, and her heart is disputed by a great number of noblemen. The Count de Niebla[1], eldest son of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, chief of the family of Guzman, and Don Luis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis de Carpio and my own sister, are the two candidates who seem best entitled to the preference: especially the last, who possesses merit so much superior to that of his rivals, that all the Court persuade themselves I shall make choice of him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into the reasons which I have to exclude him, as well as the Count de Niebla, I will tell thee that I have cast my eyes on Don Ramiro Nuñez de Guzman[2], Marquis de

[1] This name is given as 'Niebles' in the original, and the misprint was reproduced by the translator.

[2] This young man (afterwards Duke of Medina de las Torres) has been identified as the Tirsi of Lope de Vega's eclogue entitled *Filis*, and therefore as the seducer of

Toral, and chief of the family of Guzman de Abiados: to this young nobleman, and the children which he shall have by my daughter, I intend to leave my whole estate annexed to the title of Count de Olivares, to which I will join the quality of Grandee: so that, my grand-children and their descendants proceeding from the branch of Abiados and that of Olivares, will pass for the eldest of the Guzman family.

'Well, Santillana (added he), dost thou not approve of my design?' 'Pardon me, sir (answered I), the project is worthy of the genius that formed it; I am only afraid that the Duke of Medina Sidonia will murmur at it.' 'Let him murmur, if he pleases (resumed the Minister), I shall give myself very little trouble about that. I don't love his branch, which hath usurped the birthright and titles thereunto attached, over the house of Abiados. I shall mind his complaints less than the chagrin of my sister the Marchioness of Carpio, in seeing her son disappointed in his expectation of my daughter. But, after all, I intend to please myself, and it is already decided that Don Ramiro shall prevail over all his rivals.'

The Count-Duke having taken this resolution, gave a new mark of his singular policy, in putting it into practice. He presented a petition to the King, begging that he and the Queen would be pleased to bestow his daughter in marriage, describing the characters of the noblemen who were in pursuit of her, and leaving the choice entirely to their Majesties; but he did not fail, in speaking of the Marquis de Toral, to show that he was the most agreeable of them all. Whereupon, the King, who had a blind complaisance for his Minister, returned this answer:

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Lope's daughter Antonia Clara in 1634: see José Ibero Ribas y Canfranc (the pseudonym of Francisco Asenjo Barbieri), *Ultimos amores de Lope de Vega Carpio* (Madrid, 1876), 115. But good reasons for rejecting this theory are given by Professor Hugo Albert Rennert in his *Life of Lope de Vega* (Glasgow, 1904), 367-368.

'I believe Don Ramiro Nuñez worthy of your daughter, Doña Maria; nevertheless, take your own choice. The match which will suit you best will be the most agreeable to me.

'THE KING.'

The Minister affected to show this answer; and pretending to look upon it as his Prince's order, made haste to marry his daughter to the Marquis de Toral; an event that very much displeased the Marchioness de Carpio, as well as the Guzmans, who had flattered themselves with the hope of an alliance with Doña Maria. Nevertheless, as they could not hinder the marriage, they affected to celebrate it with great demonstrations of joy. One would have thought the whole family was charmed with the occasion; but the malcontents were soon revenged in a manner very melancholy for the Count-Duke. Doña Maria in ten months brought forth a daughter, which died in the birth, and in a few days after fell herself a victim to death. What a loss was this for a father, who (to use the expression) had no eyes but for his daughter; and who saw in this event the miscarriage of his design, of taking the right of seniority from the branch of Medina Sidonia. He was so much affected that for some days he shut himself up, and would see nobody but me, who, conforming myself to his immoderate grief, seemed as much afflicted as he. To tell the truth, I made use of this occasion to shed fresh tears to the memory of Antonia. The resemblance which her death had to that of the Marchioness de Toral burst open again the wound which was but imperfectly cured, and renewed my affliction so much, that the Minister, overwhelmed as he was with his own sorrow, could not help being struck with mine. He was astonished to see me enter so warmly into his chagrin. 'Gil Blas (said he one day, perceiving me plunged in the most melancholy sadness), it is a sweet consolation for me to have such a sympathizing confidant.' 'Ah! my lord (answered I), giving to him all the honour of my afflic-

tion), I must be very ungrateful and hard-hearted indeed, if I did not sincerely sympathize with your Grace. How can I consider that you mourn the loss of a daughter of accomplished merit, whom you tenderly loved, without mingling my tears with yours? No, my lord, I am so sensible of your goodness, that as long as I live I shall always share in your pain as well as pleasure.'

## CHAPTER X

*Gil Blas by accident meets the poet Nuñez, who tells him that he has composed a tragedy, which is immediately to be represented on the Prince's Theatre. The bad success of that piece, with the surprising good luck which attended its fall*

The Minister began to be consoled, and I of consequence to resume my good humour, when one evening I went out all alone to take the air in my coach, and met in my way the Asturian poet, whom I had not seen since he quitted the hospital. He being very well dressed, I took him into the coach, and we drove together to St. Jerome's Meadow.

'Mr. Nuñez (said I to him), I think myself very lucky in having met you by chance, otherwise I should not have had the pleasure——' 'No reproaches, Santillana (said he with precipitation), I sincerely own that I had no intention to visit you, and you shall hear the reason. You promised me a good post, provided I should abjure poetry; and I have found a very substantial one, on condition that I make verse. I have accepted this last, as most suitable to my humour. A friend of mine has introduced me into the family of Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, treasurer of the King's galleys. This Don Bertrand, who wants to have a wit in his pay, finding my versification very brilliant, has chosen me preferably to five or six authors who offered themselves

as candidates for the employment of his private secretary.'

'I am very glad to hear it, my dear Fabricio (said I), for this Don Bertrand is in all appearance very rich.' 'Rich! (answered he) they say he has such immense wealth, that he cannot count it. Be that as it will, my office is this; as he piques himself upon being gallant, and would pass for a man of genius, he keeps a literary correspondence with several very sprightly ladies, and I lend him my pen to compose billets filled with wit and humour. I write for him, in verse to one, in prose to another, and sometimes in person carry the letters, to show the multiplicity of my talents.'

'But thou hast not told me (said I) what I chiefly desire to know; art thou well paid for thy epistolary epigrams?' 'Very largely (he replied). Rich people are not always generous, and I know some of them who are mere scrubs, but Don Bertrand uses me very nobly. Over and above two hundred pistoles of fixed wages, I frequently receive from him small gratifications, which put me in a condition to act the gentleman, and pass my time agreeably with some authors who are, like me, enemies to care.' 'But (I resumed) has thy treasurer taste enough to relish the beauties of a work of genius, and to perceive its faults?' 'Not at all (answered Nuñez), though he can talk speciously, he is by no means a connoisseur. He gives himself out, however, for another Tarpa[1], decides boldly, and supports his opinion with such loudness and obstinacy, that generally when he disputes, his antagonist is obliged to yield, in order to avoid the shower of ill language with which he is wont to overwhelm his opponents.'

'Thou mayst well believe (pursued he) that I am very cautious of contradicting him, whatever cause he gives me for so doing; for besides the disagreeable epithets which I should certainly bring upon myself, I might possibly be turned out of doors. I, therefore, prudently applaud what he praises, and disapprove of

[1] The senior censor of the Collegium Poetarum in Rome.

everything which he condemns. By this complaisance, which costs me nothing, because I possess the art of accommodating myself to the characters of those who can befriend me, I have gained the friendship and esteem of my patron. He has engaged me to compose a tragedy on a subject which he suggested. I have accordingly finished it under his eye; and if it succeeds, I shall owe one part of my glory to his good advice.'

I asked the title of this tragedy, and he told me it was called the *Count de Saldaña*[1], informing me at the same time that it would be represented in three days at the Prince's Theatre. 'I wish (answered I) that it may have a great run, and I have such a good opinion of thy genius as to hope it will.' 'I hope so too (said he), but there is no dependence upon such hope, so uncertain are authors of the fate of a dramatic piece.' At length the first day of its representation arrived; and as I could not go to the play, being hindered by a commission I had to perform for his Grace, all that I could do was to send Scipio thither, that I might at least know that very evening the success of a performance in which I interested myself. After having waited with impatience, I saw him return with a look from which I conceived a bad omen. 'Well (said I), how hath the *Count de Saldaña* been received by the public?' 'Very brutally (answered he); never was piece more barbarously used. I came away incensed at the insolence of the pit.' 'And I (said I) am incensed at the madness of Nuñez, in composing plays. Must he not have lost his judgement entirely, to prefer the ignominous shouts and hisses of an audience, to the happy lot which I could have procured for him?' Thus through friendship did I inveigh against the Asturian poet, and afflicted myself

[1] There exists a play so entitled, ascribed to Álvaro Cubillo de Aragon, an author who flourished between 1625 and 1660: the First Part of the *Conde de Saldaña* is preserved in a *suelta*, while the Second Part is printed in *De los mejores el mejor* (Madrid, 1660).

at the misfortune of his piece, while he exulted in the event.

Two days after, he actually came to my house in a transport of joy. 'Santillana (cried he), I am come to share with thee the extreme pleasure which I feel. In composing a bad play, my friend, I have made my fortune. Thou knowest the strange reception which the *Count de Saldaña* met with; all the spectators exclaimed against him, as if for a wager, and to that general exclamation I owe my good fortune.'

Astonished to hear the poet Nuñez talk in that manner, 'How! Fabricio (said I), is it possible that the fall of thy tragedy can justify this thy immoderate joy?' 'Yes, sure (answered he), I told thee before, that Don Bertrand had inserted some of his own composition in my piece, which in consequence he thought excellent. He was violently piqued to find the spectators of a different opinion, and this morning said to me, 'Nuñez, *Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*[1]: if the public is displeased with thy production, in recompense, it pleases me; and that is enough. To console thee for the bad taste of the age, I will give thee two thousand crowns a year on my estate; let us go instantly to my notary, and have the deed drawn." We went thither accordingly, the treasurer has signed the deed, and paid me the first year advance.'

I congratulated Fabricio on the unhappy fate of the *Count de Saldaña*, since it had turned out so much to the author's advantage. 'Thou hast reason (continued he) to compliment me on that occasion; how happy am I in having been soundly hissed! if the public had been kind enough to honour me with applause, what service should I have received from it? Nothing of consequence. I should have got but a very moderate sum for my labour, whereas its hisses have all of a sudden made me easy for life.'

[1] Lucan, *Pharsalia*, I, 128.

## CHAPTER XI

*Santillana obtains an employment for Scipio, who departs for New Spain*

My secretary could not without envy look upon the unexpected good fortune of the poet Nuñez, which was the sole subject of his discourse during eight whole days. 'I admire (said he) the caprice of fortune, that sometimes delights in loading a detestable author with wealth, while she leaves men of genius in misery; I wish she would take it in her head also to enrich me in the space of one night.' 'That may very well happen (said I), and much sooner than you imagine. Thou art here in her temple, for I think we may call the Prime Minister's house the temple of fortune, where favours are often bestowed, which all of a sudden enrich those who obtain them.' 'That is true, sir (answered he), but they must be waited for with patience.' 'Once more, Scipio (said I), make yourself easy; perhaps you are on the point of having some good post.' A few days after, an opportunity actually offered of employing him advantageously in the service of the Count-Duke, and I did not let it escape.

Discoursing one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, steward of the Prime Minister, our conversation turned upon his Excellency's revenues. 'His Grace (said he) enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, which are worth forty thousand crowns per annum, and he is obliged to wear the Cross of Alcántara only. Besides, his three posts of Great Chamberlain, Master of the Horse, and Grand Chancellor of the Indies, bring in two hundred thousand more; and all that is nothing in comparison to the immense sums which he draws from America. I will tell you how: when the King's ships set sail from Seville or Lisbon for that country, he embarks on board of them wine, oil, and corn, which his estate of Olivares

affords, and he pays no duty. He sells these commodities in the Indies for four times the price which they would yield in Spain, then employs the money in purchasing spices, colours, and other things which are bought for almost nothing in that new world, and afterwards are sold at a high rate in Europe. He has already got many millions by this traffic, without doing the least prejudice to the King. What will not surprise you (continued he) is, that the people employed in transacting this commerce always return enriched, the Count allowing them to take care of their own fortune, while they manage his.'

Coscolina's son, who listened to our discourse, could not hear Don Raymond talk thus, without interrupting him. 'Zooks! Señor Caporis, I should be glad to be one of these people, for I have long wished to see Mexico.' 'Your curiosity will soon be satisfied (said the steward to him) if Señor de Santillana has no objection to your desire. Though I am very nice in the choice of those whom I send to the Indies on this employment (for I choose them all), I will, without hesitation, insert you in my register, if your master desires it.' 'You will oblige me in so doing (I said to Don Raymond), pray give me that mark of your friendship. Scipio is a young man whom I love; besides, he has a great deal of understanding, and will behave in an irreproachable manner. In a word, I can answer for him as for myself.'

'If that be the case (resumed Caporis), let him repair immediately to Seville, the ships will sail for the Indies in a month. He shall have a letter from me at his departure, for a man who will give him all necessary instructions to enrich himself, without prejudicing the interests of his Excellency, which must ever be looked upon as sacred.'

Scipio, charmed with his employment, made haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns which I gave him, to buy wine and oil in Andalusia, and put him in a condition to trade in the Indies on his own bottom. Nevertheless, glad as he was to make a

voyage by which he hoped to profit so much, he could not leave me without shedding tears, and I could not behold his departure with indifference.

## CHAPTER XII

*Don Alphonso de Leyva comes to Madrid; the motive of his journey. Gil Blas is afflicted at the cause, but rejoices at the consequence of it*

Scipio was scarce gone, when a page belonging to the Minister brought to me a billet containing these words, 'If Señor de Santillana will give himself the trouble to call at the sign of St. Gabriel in Toledo Street, he will there see one of his best friends.' 'Who can this anonymous friend be? (said I to myself). Why does he conceal his name? He wants, I suppose, to give me the pleasure of surprise.' I went out immediately to Toledo Street, and going to the appointed place, was not a little astonished to see Don Alphonso de Leyva. 'Are you here, my lord? (cried I). 'Yes, my dear Gil Blas (answered he, hugging me close in his arms), it is Don Alphonso himself whom you see.' 'What brings you to Madrid?' (said I). 'I will both surprise and afflict you (he replied), in telling the cause of my journey. I am deprived of the government of Valencia, and the Prime Minister has ordered me to court, to give an account of my conduct.' I remained a whole quarter of an hour mute and thunderstruck, then recovering myself, asked what he was accused of. 'I know nothing of the matter (answered he), but impute my disgrace to a visit which I made about three weeks ago to the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma, who has been a month confined to his castle of Denia.

'O! truly (said I, interrupting him), you have reason to attribute your misfortune to that indiscreet visit; you need seek for the cause of it nowhere else; and give me leave to say, you did not consult

your usual prudence, when you went to visit the disgraced Minister.' 'The error is now committed (said he), and I have taken my resolution with a good grace. I will retire with my family to the castle of Leyva, where I will spend the rest of my days in profound peace. All that gives me concern, is my being obliged to appear before a haughty Minister, who may possibly treat me uncivilly. A sufficient mortification to a Spaniard! nevertheless it must be borne; but before I would make this submission, I was willing to speak with you.'

'My lord (said I), don't present yourself before the Minister, until I know what you are accused of; perhaps the evil is not without remedy. Be that as it will, you must allow me, if you please, to exert myself in your favour, as much as gratitude and friendship require.' So saying, I left him at the inn, assuring him that he should hear from me soon.

As I had not meddled in State affairs since the two memorials, of which eloquent mention has been made, I went to Carnero, and asked if it was true that the government of Valencia had been taken from Don Alphonso de Leyva. He answered in the affirmative, but said he was ignorant of the cause. Upon this, I formed a resolution, without hesitation, to address myself to his Grace, that I might learn from his own mouth what cause he had to complain of Don Caesar's son.

I was so much penetrated with this troublesome event, that I had no occasion to affect a melancholy look to appear afflicted in the eyes of the Count-Duke. 'What is the matter, Santillana? (said he as soon as he saw me) I perceive an impression of sorrow on thy countenance, and even the tears ready to drop from thine eyes: has anybody injured thee? speak and thou shalt be revenged.' 'My lord (answered I weeping), I could not conceal my sorrow from you if I would: I am quite in despair, being told that Don Alphonso de Leyva, is no longer Governor of Valencia; for I could not have heard a piece of news that would

affect me more.' 'What sayest thou, Gil Blas? (replied the Minister astonished). What concern canst thou have with this Don Alphonso and his government?' I then gave him a detail of all the obligations I lay under to the Lords of Leyva: and afterwards recounted in what manner I had obtained from the Duke of Lerma, the government in question, for Don Caesar's son.

When his Excellency had heard me to an end, with an attention full of kindness for me, he said, 'Dry up thy tears, my friend. I not only was ignorant of what thou hast told me, but own also that I looked upon Don Alphonso as a creature of the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma: put thyself in my place; would not the visit which he made to his Eminence make thee suspect him? I am willing to believe, however, that having received his employment from the Cardinal, he took that step out of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his post to thee; but if I have destroyed thy work, I can repair it. I will even do more for thee than the Duke of Lerma did: thy friend Don Alphonso was no more than Governor of the city of Valencia, and I will make him Viceroy of the kingdom of Aragon: thou mayst go and inform him of this piece of news, and desire him to come and take the oaths.'

When I heard these words I passed from the extremity of grief to an excess of joy, which disturbed my intellect so much, that my disorder appeared in the compliment of thanks which I made to his Grace, who was not, however, displeased at my confusion. But when I told him that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he said I might introduce him that very day. I ran immediately to the St. Gabriel, where Don Caesar's son was overjoyed to hear of his new employment; he could scarce believe what I said, so improbable did it seem to him, that the Minister, whatever friendship he had for me, was capable of bestowing vice-royalties on my recommendation. I conducted him to the Count-Duke, who received him very politely,

and told him, 'He had behaved so well in his government of the city of Valencia, that the King thinking him qualified to fill a higher place, had named him to the viceroyalty of Aragon. Besides (added he), that dignity is not above your birth, and the nobility of Aragon cannot murmur at the choice of the Court.'

His Excellency made no mention of me, and the public never knew the part which I acted in this affair: a circumstance that saved Don Alphonso and the Minister a great many satirical remarks that people might have passed upon a Viceroy of my making.

As soon as Don Caesar's son was certain of the place, he dispatched an express to Valencia to inform his father and Seraphina of his good fortune, and they soon came to Madrid: their first care was to find me, and overwhelm me with thanks. What a moving and glorious sight was it for me, to see myself embraced with eagerness by the three persons in the world whom I loved most! As sensible of my zeal and affection as of the honour which the post of Viceroy did to their family, their expressions of gratitude to me were infinite; they even spoke to me as to one of their own rank; they seemed to have forgotten that I was their servant; and thought they could never enough manifest their friendship. To suppress useless circumstances, Don Alphonso having received his letters patent, thanked the King and his Minister, and having taken the usual oaths, set out with his family from Madrid, to go and fix his abode at Saragossa, where he made his entrance with all possible magnificence; and the Aragonians showed by their acclamations that they were very well pleased with the Viceroy whom I had set over them.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Gil Blas meets Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Don Andrés de Tordesillas at the palace. The conclusion of the story of Don Gaston and Doña Helena de Galisteo. Santillana does an important piece of service to Tordesillas*

I was overjoyed at having so luckily changed a displaced Governor into a Viceroy: even the Lords of Leyva were less pleased at it than I was. I soon had another opportunity of employing my credit for a friend; which I think I should relate to persuade the reader that I was no longer the same Gil Blas who sold the favours of the Court under the preceding Ministry.

Being one day in the King's antechamber, discoursing with noblemen, who, knowing my situation with the Prime Minister, did not disdain my conversation; I perceived in the crowd Don Gaston de Cogollos, that State prisoner whom I had left in the tower of Segovia; and the keeper, Don Andrés de Tordesillas, along with him. I immediately quitted my company to go and embrace these two friends, whom, if they were astonished to see me there, I was still more so to meet in that place. After some warm hugs on both sides, Don Gaston said to me, 'Señor de Santillana, we have a world of questions to ask mutually, and this is not a convenient place for that purpose: allow me to conduct you to a house where Señor de Tordesillas and I will be glad to have a long conversation with you.' I consented to this proposal; we squeezed through the crowd, and going out of the palace, found Don Gaston's coach waiting for us in the street; we went into it all three, and were driven to the great market-place where the bull-fights take place, and there Cogollos lived in a very handsome house. 'Señor Gil Blas (said Don Andrés, when we were set in a hall magnificently furnished), at your departure

from Segovia you seemed to hate the Court, and to be resolved to remove from it for ever.' 'That was actually my design (answered I), and so long as the late King lived I did not change my sentiments; but when I understood that the Prince, his son, was on the throne, I was willing to see if the new monarch would know me again; he did recollect me, and I had the good fortune to be favourably received; he himself recommended me to the Prime Minister, who has conceived a friendship for me, and with whom I am in still greater favour than ever I was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Señor Don Andrés, is what I had to tell you. Now, pray, let me know if you are still keeper of the tower of Segovia?' 'No, indeed (he replied): the Count-Duke has put another in my place; in all probability, believing me wholly devoted to his predecessor.' 'And as for me (said Don Gaston), I was set at liberty for a quite contrary reason. The Prime Minister no sooner learned that I was imprisoned at Segovia, by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be discharged: it now remains, Señor Gil Blas, to inform you of what has happened to me since I have been enlarged.

'The first thing I did (continued he) after having thanked Don Andrés for his kindness to me during my confinement, was to repair to Madrid, and present myself before the Count-Duke de Olivares, who said to me, "Don't be afraid that the misfortune which hath happened to you will in the least prejudice your reputation: you are now fully justified: and I am the more convinced of your innocence, because the Marquis de Villareal, whose accomplice you were suspected to be, was not guilty; for, though he is a Portuguese, and even related to the Duke of Braganza, he is not so much in his interests as in those of the King my master. Your intimacy with that Marquis is, therefore, no reproach upon you; and in order to repair the injustice which you suffered, in being accused of treason, the King has bestowed upon you a lieutenancy in the Spanish Guards." I accepted the commission, begging

that his Excellency would allow me, before I should enter upon my duty, to go to Coria and visit my aunt, Doña Eleonora de Laxarilla. The Minister gave me leave for a month, and I set out, accompanied by one lackey only: we had already passed Colmenar, and were engaged in a hollow road, between two mountains, when we perceived a cavalier defending himself valiantly against three men who attacked him all together. I did not hesitate, but rode to his succour, and put myself on his side. I observed while we fought that our enemies were masked, and that we had to do with vigorous swordsmen: however, in spite of their strength and skill, we remained conquerors; for I pierced one of the three, who fell from his horse, and the other two immediately betook themselves to flight. The victory, indeed, was not much less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I had killed; since, after the action, my companion and I found ourselves dangerously wounded. But you may guess what was my surprise when in this cavalier I recognized Combados, the husband of Doña Helena! He was no less astonished when he saw that I was his defender: "Ah, Don Gaston! (cried he) was it you, then, who came to my assistance? When you so generously espoused my cause, you little thought it was that of the man who deprived you of your mistress." "I was really ignorant of it (answered I), but had I known you, do you imagine that I should have scrupled to do what I have done? Are you so much mistaken in me as to think me so base?" "No, no (he replied), I have a better opinion of your virtue; and if I die of the wounds which I have received, I hope yours will not hinder you from profiting by my death." "Combados (said I), although I have not yet forgotten Doña Helena, know that I don't desire to enjoy her, at the expense of your life; I am even glad of having contributed towards saving you from the swords of three assassins, since in that I have performed an action agreeable to your wife." While we conversed in this manner my lackey alighted, and

approaching the dead cavalier, took off his mask and discovered features which Combados immediately knew. "It is Caprara! (cried he) that perfidious cousin, who, out of spite, for having been disappointed of a rich estate which he unjustly disputed with me, has a long time cherished the desire of murdering me, and at length chosen this day to put it in execution; but Heaven hath permitted him to fall a victim to his own design."

'Meanwhile our blood flowed apace, and we grew weaker and weaker: nevertheless, wounded as we were, we had strength enough to go to the town of Villarejo, which was but two gunshots from the field of battle. We alighted at the first inn we came to, and sending for surgeons, one was brought, who had the reputation of being very expert in his profession: he examined our wounds, which he found dangerous, then dressed them, and next day, after having taken off the dressings, declared that the wounds of Don Blas were mortal; he judged more favourably of mine, and his prognostics were fulfilled.

'Combados, hearing his doom, thought of nothing but preparing for death: he likewise dispatched an express to inform his wife of what had happened, and of his present melancholy situation; upon which, Doña Helena, setting out immediately, soon arrived at Villarejo, her mind disturbed with a disquiet which had two different causes: the danger in which her husband was, and the dread of feeling that, at sight of me, she might revive a flame which was but half extinguished, created a terrible agitation in her breast. "Madam (said Don Blas when she came into his presence), you arrive in time enough to receive my last adieu: I am going to die, and I regard my death as the punishment of Heaven, for having by a deceit deprived you of Don Gaston. Far from murmuring at my fate, I exhort you to restore to him the heart which I unjustly seized." Doña Helena answered only by her tears; and truly it was the best reply she could make, as she was not as yet so much detached from me as to for-

get the artifice which he had practised to make her break her vows.

'As the surgeon had prognosticated, Combados died of his wounds in less than three days, while mine indicated a speedy cure. The young widow who was wholly engrossed by the care of transporting her husband's corpse to Coria, in order to perform all the funeral honours which she owed to his ashes, departed from Villarejo, after having inquired (through pure politeness) about my health. As soon as I could follow her, I set out also for Coria, where my recovery being completed, my aunt, Doña Eleonora, and Don George de Galisteo resolved that Helena and I should be married forthwith, lest fortune should again part us by some unlucky accident. This marriage was celebrated in private, on account of the too recent death of Don Blas; and a few days after, I returned to Madrid with Doña Helena. As I had exceeded the time prescribed by the Count-Duke for my journey, I was afraid that he had given to another the lieutenancy which he had promised to me: but he had not disposed of it, and was so good as to admit the excuses which I made for my delay.

'I am now (continued Cogollos) lieutenant of the Spanish Guard, am pleased with my employment, and have contracted some agreeable friends, with whom I live very happily.' 'I wish I could say as much (cried Don Andrés): but I am very far from being satisfied with my condition: I have lost my post, which was pretty advantageous; and I have no friends who have credit enough to procure me such another.' 'Pardon me, Señor Don Andrés (said I smiling), you have in me a friend who is good for something. I have already said that I am still better beloved by the Count-Duke, than ever I was by the Duke of Lerma, and you have the assurance to tell me, to my face, that you have not a friend who can procure a good post for you. Have I not once before done you such a piece of service? Remember that, by the interest of the Archbishop of Granada, I was the

occasion of your being named to exercise an employment at Mexico where you would have made your fortune if love had not detained you in the city of Alicante; and I am at present more capable of serving you, having the ear of the Prime Minister.' 'I trust wholly to you then (replied Tordesillas), but, (added he smiling in his turn), pray, don't send me to New Spain; I would not go thither if I was to be made chief judge of Mexico.'

We were interrupted in this part of our conversation, by Doña Helena, who came into the hall, and whose amiable person equalled the charming idea which I had formed of her beauty. 'Madam (said Cogollos to her), this is Señor de Santillana, of whom you have heard me speak, and whose agreeable company hath often suspended my sorrows while I was in prison.' 'Yes, madam (said I to Doña Helena), my conversation pleased him, because you were always the subject of it.' Don George's daughter made a modest reply to my compliment; after which I took my leave of this couple, protesting that I was ravished to find their long passion was at length crowned by a happy marriage. Then addressing myself to Tordesillas, I desired him to give me his direction, and when he had done so: 'Without bidding you adieu, Don Andrés (said I), I hope in less than eight days, you will see that I have power as well as friendship.' My words were soon verified; the very next day, the Count-Duke furnished me with an occasion to oblige the Keeper. 'Santillana (said his Excellency), the place of Governor of the royal prison at Valladolid, is vacant: it brings in more than three hundred pistoles per annum and I am resolved to bestow it upon thee.' 'I would not have it, my lord (answered I), were it worth ten thousand ducats yearly: I renounce all posts that I cannot enjoy, without removing from your Grace.' 'But (resumed the Minister), thou mayst very well enjoy this, without being obliged to leave Madrid, except to go sometimes to Valladolid, to visit the prison.' 'You may say what you please (I replied);

I will not accept of that employment, but on condition that I shall be allowed to resign in favour of a brave gentleman called Don Andrés de Tordesillas, formerly keepe. of the tower of Segovia: I should love to make him that present, as an acknowledgement for the kind treatment I received from him during my confinement.'

The Minister, laughing at this discourse, said, 'I see, Gil Blas, thou hast a mind to make a Governor of a royal prison, as thou hast made a Viceroy. Well, be it so, my friend, I give thee this vacant place for Tordesillas; but tell me freely, what advantage thou wilt reap from it: for I don't believe thee fool enough to employ thy credit for nothing.' 'My lord (answered I), ought not a man to pay his debts? Don Andrés, in the most disinterested manner, did me all the service he could: ought not I to requite his generosity?' 'You are become very disinterested, Mr. Santillana (said his Excellency). I think you were not so much so, under the last Minister.' 'I own it (said I), my morals were corrupted by bad example: as everything was then put to sale, I conformed myself to the fashion; and as everything is now given away I have resumed my integrity.'

I procured, then, the government of the royal prison of Valladolid, for Don Andrés, whom, in a little time, I sent to that city, as well satisfied with his new settlement as I was with the opportunity of acquitting myself of the obligations I owed him.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Santillana visits the poet Nuñez: an account of the persons whom he found, and the discourse which he heard at his lodgings*

One afternoon, I was seized with an inclination to visit the Asturian poet, being curious to know how he was lodged. I went accordingly to the house of

Señor Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, and asking for Nuñez, 'He does not live here (said the porter): but lodges there at present, having hired the back-part of the house.' So saying, he pointed to a house in the neighbourhood, whither I went, and after having crossed a small court, entered into a bare hall, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his companions, whom he treated that day.

They had almost dined, and consequently were in a trim for disputing; but as soon as they perceived me their noisy discourse subsided into profound silence. Nuñez got up with great eagerness to receive me, crying: 'Gentlemen, this is Señor de Santillana, who is so good as to honour me with a visit; pray, join me in paying your respects to the favourite of the Prime Minister.' At these words all the guests got up also to salute me; and, in favour of the title which I had received, treated me with great civility and respect. Although I was neither hungry nor thirsty, I could not excuse myself from sitting down at table with them; and was even obliged to honour the toast which they had proposed.

As I imagined that my presence was a check upon their conversation: 'Gentlemen (said I), I have interrupted your discourse: pray, resume it, or I will be gone.' 'These gentlemen (said Fabricio), were talking of the *Iphigenia* of Euripides. The bachelor Melchor de Villegas, who is a critic of the first order, was asking Señor Don Jacinto de Romarata, what was the most interesting circumstance of that tragedy.' 'Yes (said Don Jacinto), and I answered that it was the danger of Iphigenia.' 'And I (said the bachelor) replied—and I am ready to demonstrate my assertion—that the danger is not the most interesting part of the subject.' 'What is, then? (cried the old licentiate Gabriel de Leon).' ''Tis the wind (said the bachelor).'

The whole company burst out into laughing at this repartee, which I could not believe serious; I thought that Melchor pronounced it, with a view of enlivening the conversation: but I did not know this

virtuoso, who was a man that did not at all understand raillery. 'Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen (replied he dryly); I maintain that the wind alone ought to interest, surprise, and move the spectator: figure to yourselves a numerous army assembled to go and besiege Troy: conceive all the impatience of the chiefs and soldiers to execute that enterprise that they may speedily return into Greece, where they have left what is most dear to them—their wives, children, and household gods: in the meantime, a cursed contrary wind detains them at Aulis, seems to nail them to the port, and if it does not change they cannot go and besiege the city of Priam; it is the wind, therefore, which constitutes the most interesting point of that tragedy. I share with the Greeks—I espouse their cause—my whole wish is the departure of the fleet, and I see with indifference the danger of Iphigenia since her death is the only means of obtaining a favourable wind from the gods.'

Villegas had no sooner done speaking than the laugh was renewed at his expense. Nuñez was so mischievous as to support his opinion that he might afford more game to the railers, who began to pass a great many jokes upon the wind: but the bachelor, beholding them all with a phlegmatic, haughty look, treated them as ignorant and vulgar minds. I expected every moment to see them warm and to go to loggerheads—the usual end of their dissertations; but I was balked in my expectation: they were contented with reviling one another, and withdrew when they had eaten and drank their fill.

When they were gone, I asked Fabricio, why he did not live still with his treasurer, and if he had quarrelled with him. 'Quarrelled! (answered he) God forbid! I am more in favour than ever with Señor Don Bertrand, who has allowed me to lodge by myself. I have, therefore, hired these lodgings to receive my friends, and make merry with them in full liberty: which is often the case; for thou knowest that I am not of a humour to leave much wealth to my heirs;

and what is very happy for me I am, at present, in a condition of enjoying parties of pleasure everyday.' 'I am overjoyed to hear it, my dear Nuñez (said I), and I cannot help congratulating thee again upon the success of thy last tragedy: the whole eight hundred dramatic pieces of the great Lope[1] have not brought him one-fourth of what thou hast got by thy *Count de Saldaña.*

[1] Gil Blas underestimates the number of Lope's plays; he had written nine hundred before Philip III died, and by 1624 the total had risen to one thousand and seventy. He is stated by Juan Perez de Montalban—an untrustworthy and uncritical admirer, it is true—to have written about eight hundred more plays during the eleven years of life that remained to him.

THE END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK

# BOOK XII

## CHAPTER I

*Gil Blas is sent to Toledo by the Minister: the motive and success of his journey*

During a whole month almost his Grace had been saying to me everyday, 'Santillana, the time draws near when I shall set thy address to work'; and still this time did not come. At length, however, it arrived; and his Excellency spoke to me in these words: 'It is reported that in the company of players belonging to Toledo there is a young actress whose talents make a great noise: it is said that she dances and sings divinely, and quite captivates the spectator by her declamation. I am assured also that she has a considerable share of beauty. Such a genius deserves to appear at Court. The King loves plays, music, and dancing; and he must not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing and hearing a person of such extraordinary merit. I have resolved, therefore, to send thee to Toledo, to judge by thyself whether or not she is actually such a wonderful actress. I will be governed by the impression she shall make upon thee, as I depend a great deal on thy discernment.' I answered that I should give his Grace a good account of that affair; and prepared for my departure with one lackey only, whom I ordered to put off the Minister's livery, that things might be done the more mysteriously. And this was very much to his Excellency's taste. I set out, then, for Toledo, where, when I arrived, I alighted at an inn near the castle. Scarce had I set my foot to the ground when the landlord, taking me,

doubtless, for some country gentleman, said to me, 'Señor Cavalier, I suppose you are come to town to see the august ceremony of the *auto de fe*, which is to be performed to-morrow.' I answered in the affirmative, thinking it more prudent to let him believe that than to give him an opportunity of questioning me about my coming to Toledo. 'You will see (he resumed) one of the finest processions that ever happened: there are (I am told) more than a hundred prisoners, among which they reckon above ten who are to be burnt.'

Next morning, indeed, before sunrise, I heard all the bells of the city tolling; and this melancholy sound was to advertise the people, that they were going to begin the *auto de fe*. Curious to see this solemnity, I put on my clothes in a hurry, and repaired to the Inquisition. All along the streets through which the procession was to pass scaffolds were erected, upon one of which I hired a place. In a little time I perceived the Dominicans, who walked foremost, preceded by the banners of the Inquisition. These good Fathers were immediately followed by the wretched victims who were to be sacrificed that day by the Holy Office. These miserable creatures walked one after another, with their heads and feet bare, each having a wax-taper in his hand, and a godfather by his side. Some had large scapularies of yellow stuff, garnished with St. Andrew's crosses painted red, and called *sanbenitos*[1]; others wore

[1] The *sanbenito* (=*saco bendito*) was not invented spontaneously by the Spanish Inquisition, but was gradually evolved from the primitive penitential garb of sackcloth sprinkled with ashes. The original *sanbenitillo*, prescribed by Torquemada in 1490, was a tabard of black or grey cloth, eighteen inches long and nine wide, 'hanging on breast and back, with a red cross before and behind, occupying nearly the entire field.' In 1514 the ordinary cross was changed into a St. Andrew's cross by order of Cardinal Ximenes, and in 1561 yellow linen was generally substituted for black or grey cloth: see Dr. Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* (New York and London, 1906–1907), iii, 162–163.

*corozas*[1], which are high paper caps made in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and covered with flames and diabolical figures.

As I looked attentively at these unfortunate people, with a compassion which I took care to conceal, that I might not suffer for it, I thought I recognized, among those who had their heads adorned with *corozas*, the Reverend Father Hilary and his companion, Brother Ambrose. They passed so near me that I could not be mistaken. 'What do I see? (said I to myself). Heaven, wearied with the disorderly lives of these wretches, hath delivered them at last to the justice of the Inquisition!' So saying, I felt myself seized with horror: I trembled from head to foot, and my spirits were so disordered, that I had almost swooned. The connexion which I once had with these rogues, the adventure of Xelva, in short, all the circumstances of my correspondence with them, presented themselves that moment to my fancy; and I thought I could never be thankful enough to God for having preserved me from the scapulary and *corozas*.

When the ceremony was ended, I returned to the inn, trembling at the dreadful spectacle which I had beheld: but these afflicting images, which disturbed my imagination, dispersed insensibly: and now my whole study was to acquit myself handsomely of the commission entrusted to my care. I waited impatiently for playtime, that I might go to the theatre, judging that to be the most proper beginning of my work: and as soon as the hour came I went thither, and sat down by a knight of Alcántara, with whom

[1] This word is misprinted '*Carochas*' in the original and in the translation. *Corozas* were 'conical mitres, about three-quarters of an ell in height . . . with flames for those who are too relaxed, and in the ordinary form for bigamists, sorcerers, and false-witnesses.' The use of *corozas* was forbidden in 1596 by the Roman Inquisition as tending to compromise the episcopal dignity, but the Spanish Inquisition made no change in its practice: see H. C. Lea, *op. cit.*, iii, 215.

I entered into conversation. 'Señor (said I to him), may a stranger be so bold as to ask you one question?' 'Señor Cavalier (answered he, very politely), I shall think it an honour.' 'I have heard the actors of Toledo (I resumed) very much extolled: pray, have I been misinformed?' 'No (replied the knight), their company is not bad; nay, there are great players among them. You will see, among others, the fair Lucretia, an actress of fourteen years of age, who will surprise you very much. I shall have no occasion to point her out to you; when she appears, you will easily distinguish her from the rest.' I asked if she was to play that evening, and he told me she would; observing at the same time that she had a very shining part to act in the piece which was going to be represented.

The play began; and two actresses, who had neglected nothing which could contribute towards rendering them charming, appeared on the stage: but, in spite of the lustre of their diamonds, I took neither the one nor the other for her whom I expected. At length Lucretia walked forwards from the bottom of the stage; and her appearance was saluted by a long and general clapping of hands. 'Ah! there she is (said I to myself): what a noble air! What grace! What fine eyes! O the divine creature!' I was actually very well pleased, or rather, passionately struck with her person. On hearing her recite the first couplet, I found she had nature, fire, an understanding above her age; and I willingly joined my applause to that which she received from the whole audience during the performance. 'Well (said the knight to me), you see how Lucretia is caressed by the public.' 'I am not at all surprised at it' (answered I). 'You would be less so still (said he), if you had heard her sing. She is a perfect siren. Woe be to those who listen! Her dancing is no less formidable. Her steps, as dangerous as her voice, charm the eye, and force the heart to yield.' 'If that be the case (cried I), it must be owned she is a prodigy!

What happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for such an amiable creature ?'

'She has no declared lover (said he), and even scandal has not as yet involved her in any private intrigue. Nevertheless (added he), this may soon be the case; for Lucretia is under the conduct of her aunt Estella, who is certainly the most expert of all the actresses.' At the name of Estella I interrupted the knight with precipitation, to ask if that Estella was an actress of the Toledo company. 'She is one of the best of them (said he): she has not acted to-day, and we have suffered by her absence: she usually plays the part of the waiting-woman, which she performs to admiration. Her action is full of spirit; perhaps too full: but it is an agreeable fault, which ought to be forgiven.' The knight told me wonders of this Estella; and by the picture he drew of her person, I never doubted that it was Laura, that same Laura of whom I have spoken so much in my history, and whom I had left at Granada.

However, to be more certain still, after the play I went behind the scenes; and casting my eyes around, found her in the tyring-room, talking to some gentlemen, who, perhaps, regarded her only as the aunt of Lucretia. I advanced to salute Laura; but whether through whim, or in order to punish me for my precipitate departure from Granada, she pretended not to know me, and received my civilities so dryly that I was a little disconcerted. Instead of upbraiding her in a laughing humour for her cold behaviour towards me, I was fool enough to be nettled at it: I even retired hastily, resolving, in my passion, to return next day to Madrid. 'To be revenged on Laura (said I to myself), her niece shall not have the honour of appearing before the King: for this purpose I can give to the Minister such a description of Lucretia as I please: I have no more to do, but to tell him that she dances with a bad grace, that she has a squeaking voice, and in short, that her charms consist in her youth only. I am sure his Excel-

lency, after that, will have no inclination to bring her to Court.'

Such was the vengeance I meditated against Laura for her behaviour to me; but my resentment did not last long: next day, just as I was about to depart, a page entered my chamber and said, 'Here is a letter for Señor de Santillana.' 'I am the person, my child' (answered I, taking the letter, which contained these words): 'Forget the manner in which you were received last night in the tyring-room, and be so good as to follow the bearer.' I immediately took the page for my conductor, who, when we were near the play-house, introduced me into a very handsome house, where I found Laura at her toilet, in a very genteel apartment.

She got up to embrace me, saying, 'Señor Gil Blas, I know that you have no cause to be pleased with the reception you met with when you came to salute me in our tyring-room: an old friend, like you, had a right to expect more civil treatment: but I must tell you, for my excuse, that I was then in a very bad humour. When you appeared, I was quite engrossed by some scandalous discourse which one of our gentlemen had uttered against my niece, whose honour is dearer to me than my own. Your sudden retreat (added she) made me immediately recollect myself; and that moment I ordered my page to follow you to your lodging, that I might to-day make amends for my fault.' 'That is already done, my dear Laura (said I): let us talk no more of that matter: let us rather inform one another of what has happened to us, since the unlucky day on which the dread of just chastisement made me quit Granada with great precipitation. I left you, you may remember, in pretty great perplexity: pray, how did you extricate yourself? Had you not occasion for all your address, to appease your Portuguese lover?' 'Not at all (replied Laura): don't you know, that in such cases the men are so weak that they sometimes even spare the women the trouble to justify themselves? I

affirmed (continued she) to the Marquis de Marialva that thou wast my brother. Pardon me, Mr. Santillana, if I speak to you as familiarly as heretofore: but I can't get rid of my old habits. I tell thee, then, that I brazened it out: "Don't you see (said I to the Portuguese nobleman), that all this is the work of jealousy and rage? Narcissa, my comrade and rival, incensed to see me in quiet possession of a heart of which she was balked, has played me this trick: she has bribed the under candle-snuffer, who, as the minister of her resentment, has the impudence to say that he has seen me as Arsenia's chambermaid. Nothing can be more false: the widow of Don Antonio Coello always entertained too noble sentiments to humble herself so low as to serve an actress. Besides, what proves the fallacy of the accusation, and the conspiracy of my accusers, is the precipitate retreat of my brother: if he was present, he might confound their slander: but Narcissa has, doubtless, employed some new artifice to make him disappear." Though these reasons (pursued Laura) made but an indifferent apology, the Marquis was so good as to be satisfied with it: and that good-natured nobleman continued to love me until the day of his departure from Granada, on his return to Portugal. Indeed, he did not stay long after thee; and the wife of Zapata had the pleasure of seeing me lose the lover of whom I had deprived her. After that, I lived some years at Granada: then a division happening in our company, which is often the case, all the players separated: some went to Seville, others to Córdova; and I came to Toledo, where I have been ten years, with my niece Lucretia, whom thou must have seen act last night, since thou wast at the play.'

I could not help laughing in this place; and Laura, asking the cause, 'Can't you guess? (said I): you have neither brother nor sister, and, in consequence, cannot be Lucretia's aunt. Besides, when I calculate the time which hath elapsed since our last separation, and compare it with the age of your

niece, I cannot help thinking that you are more nearly related.'

'I understand you, Mr. Gil Blas (replied Don Antonio's widow, reddening), what a chronologist you are! It is impossible to make you believe it. Well, then, my friend, Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis de Marialva; she is the fruit of our correspondence; I can no longer conceal it from thee.' 'What a great effort you make, my princess (said I), in revealing that secret, after having imparted to me your adventures with the steward of the hospital of Zamora! I must tell you, moreover, Lucretia is a maid of such singular merit, that the public can never be thankful enough to you for having made such a present to it. It were to be wished that all your comrades had done the same.' If some mischievous reader in this place, recollecting the private conversations which I had with Laura at Granada, while I was secretary to the Marquis de Marialva, suspects that I might have disputed with that nobleman the honour of being Lucretia's father, it is a suspicion, the injustice of which I must avow to my shame. I recounted my principal adventures to Laura, in my turn, and made her acquainted with my present situation. She listened to my narration so attentively as to show that it was far from being indifferent to her: and when I had finished it, 'Friend Santillana (said she), I find you act a very considerable part on the theatre of the world; and you cannot imagine how much I am overjoyed at your good fortune. When I shall bring Lucretia to Madrid, with an intention to introduce her into the Prince's company, I flatter myself that she will find a powerful protector in Señor de Santillana.' 'Never doubt that (answered I), you may depend upon me: I will procure your daughter's admittance into the Prince's company whenever you please: this is what I can promise, without presuming too much upon my power.' 'I would take you at your word (replied Laura), and set out for Madrid to-morrow, were I not restricted

to this place by engagements with our company.' 'An order from Court can break these ties (said I), and you shall receive one in less than eight days. I shall be pleased to take Lucretia from the Toledans: such a handsome actress is destined for courtiers, and properly belongs to us.'

Lucretia entered the room just as I had pronounced these words; and seemed so pretty and engaging that I took her for the goddess Hebe. She had just risen; and her natural beauty shining without the help of art, presented a ravishing object to my view. 'Come, niece (said her mother to her), come and thank this gentleman for his friendship: he is an old acquaintance of mine, who has great interest at Court, and intends to introduce us both into the Prince's company.' These words seemed to give pleasure to the dear girl, who made me a low curtsy; and said, with an enchanting smile, 'I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but in taking me from the people by whom I am beloved, are you sure that I shall please the audience at Madrid?' I shall, perhaps, lose by the change. I remember to have heard my aunt say that she has seen actors caressed in one place and hissed in another; and this gives me some concern: beware of exposing me to contempt, and yourself to the reproaches of the Court.' 'Fair Lucretia (answered I), neither you nor I have reason to be apprehensive of that: I rather fear that by inflaming all that behold you, you will create some misunderstanding among our grandees.' 'The fear of my niece (said Laura) is better founded than yours: but I hope they are both vain: if Lucretia cannot make a noise by her charms, in recompense she is no contemptible actress.'

Our conversation lasted some time longer; and I had reason to conclude, from everything which Lucretia said, that she was a maid of a superior genius. I then took my leave of the two ladies, assuring them that they should soon have an order from Court to repair to Madrid.

## CHAPTER II

*Santillana gives an account of his commission to the Minister, who employs him to bring Lucretia to Madrid. The arrival of that actress, and her appearance at Court*

At my return to Madrid I found the Count-Duke very impatient to know the success of my journey. 'Gil Blas (said he), hast thou seen this same actress? Is she worth bringing to Court?' 'My lord (I replied), fame, which usually praises beauties more than they deserve, has not said enough in commendation of young Lucretia; she is an admirable creature, both as to her person and talents.' 'Is it possible! (cried the Minister, with an interior satisfaction which I read in his eyes, and which made me believe that he had sent me to Toledo on his own account) is it possible that she can be so charming?' 'When you have seen her (answered I), you will own that no eulogium can do justice to her charms.' 'Santillana (said his Excellency), give me a faithful relation of thy journey; I shall be very glad to hear it.' To satisfy my master, I then recounted all, even the history of Laura inclusively. I told him that this actress had Lucretia by the Marquis de Marialva, a Portuguese nobleman, who, stopping at Granada on his travels, fell in love with her. In short, when I had recounted to his Grace everything that happened between the two actresses and me, he said, 'I am overjoyed to hear that Lucretia is the daughter of a man of quality; that circumstance interests me still more in her behalf; she must be brought to town. But (added he), continue as thou hast begun; let me not appear in it; everything must pass in the name of Gil Blas de Santillana.'

I went and told Carnero that his Excellency desired him to expedite an order, by which the King received into his company Estella and Lucretia, two actresses

of Toledo. 'Aha! Señor de Santillana (said Carnero, with a satirical smile), yes, you shall be served immediately, since, to all appearance, you interest yourself in these two ladies.' At the same time he wrote an order with his own hand, and delivered it to me expedited; so that I sent it instantly to Estella by the same lackey who had attended me to Toledo. Eight days after, the mother and daughter arriving at Madrid, took lodgings hard by the Prince's company, and their first care was to give me notice of it by a billet. I visited them immediately, where, after a thousand offers of service on my side, and as many acknowledgements on theirs, I left them to prepare for their first public appearance, which I wished might be brilliant and successful.

They advertised themselves as two new actresses whom the Prince's company had received by an order from Court; and they began with a comedy which they had often acted at Toledo with applause. In what part of the world are new sights disregarded? The playhouse was that day filled with an extraordinary concourse of spectators; and you may well imagine that I did not fail to be there. I suffered a little before the piece began; and prepossessed as I was in favour of the talents both of mother and daughter, I trembled for them, so much was I interested in their success. But scarce had they opened their mouths, when my fear was banished by the applause which they received. Estella was looked upon as a consummate comic actress, and Lucretia as a prodigy in tender parts. This last captivated all hearts. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched by the sweetness of her voice; and everybody, struck with the graces and brilliancy of her youth, went away enchanted by her appearance.

The Count-Duke being more interested than I imagined in the first essay of this actress, was at the play that evening; and I saw him go out about the end of the performance, seemingly very well satisfied with our two new players. Curious to know if he was

really affected with their success, I followed him home, and going into his closet just after him, 'Well, my lord (said I), is your Excellency satisfied with young Marialva?' 'My Excellency (answered he smiling) would be very nice indeed, if I refused to join my vote to that of the public. Yes, child, I am charmed with thy Lucretia, and I don't doubt that the King will be pleased when he sees her.'

## CHAPTER III

*Lucretia makes a great noise at Court, and acts before the King, who falls in love with her. The consequences of his passion*

The appearance of two new actresses soon made a noise at Court; the very next day it was spoken of at the King's reception. Some noblemen extolled young Lucretia in particular, and drew such a beautiful picture of her that the monarch was struck with it: but dissembling the impression which their discourses made upon his heart, he seemed to take no notice of what they said. Nevertheless, as soon as he found himself alone with the Count-Duke, he asked who this actress was whom they praised so much. The Minister answered that she was a young player of Toledo, who had made her first appearance the preceding night with great success. 'She is called Lucretia (added he), a name very suitable to people of her profession. She is an acquaintance of Santillana's, who spoke so much in her favour that I thought proper to receive her into your Majesty's company.' The King smiled when he heard my name mentioned, because he remembered perhaps at that moment, that it was I who had made him acquainted with Catalina, and foresaw that I should do him the same service on this occasion. 'Count (said he to the Minister), I will go to-morrow and see this Lucretia act. Take care to advertise her of my intention.'

The Count-Duke having repeated this conversation to me, and informed me of the King's design, sent me to impart it to our two actresses. "I come (said I to Laura, who was the first I met) to tell you a piece of great news; you will to-morrow have among your spectators the Sovereign of this monarchy; this is what I am ordered by the Minister to acquaint you with. I don't doubt that your daughter and you will do your utmost to deserve the honour which the King intends you; but I advise you to choose a piece in which there is both dancing and music, that he may admire all the talents of Lucretia together.' 'We will take your advice (replied Laura), and do all in our power to amuse the Prince.' 'He cannot fail of being pleased (said I, seeing Lucretia come in, in a deshabille, which gave her more charms than the most superb theatrical dress). He will be so much the more satisfied with your lovely niece, as he loves singing and dancing above all other entertainments; who knows but he may be tempted to throw the handkerchief at her?' 'I don't at all wish (replied Laura) that he may have any such temptation; notwithstanding his being a powerful monarch, he might find obstacles to the accomplishment of his desires. Lucretia is virtuous, though bred behind the scenes; and whatever pleasure she may feel in seeing herself applauded on the stage, she would much rather pass for a modest girl than for a good actress.'

'Why should my aunt (said young Marialva, joining in the conversation) form such chimeras to fight with? I shall never be obliged to repulse the sighs of the King; the delicacy of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve, if he could humble his attention to me.' 'But, charming Lucretia (said I), should it happen that the Prince would attach himself to you, and choose you for his mistress, would you be so cruel as to let him languish in your chains, like an ordinary lover?' 'Why not? (answered she). Yes, doubtless: and though virtue were out of the question, my vanity would exult much more in re-

sisting than in yielding to his passion.' I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura talk in this manner; and I left the ladies, praising the one for having bestowed such good education on the other.

Next day, the King, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play. They acted a performance mixed with songs and dances, in which our young actress shone very much. From the beginning to the end I kept my eyes fixed on the monarch, and in his looks endeavoured to read his thoughts, but he baffled my penetration by an air of gravity which all along he affected to preserve. I did not learn till next day what I was so curious to know. 'Santillana (said the Minister to me), I have just left the King, who has spoken to me of Lucretia with so much vivacity that I am convinced he is captivated by that young player; and as I told him that thou wast the occasion of bringing her from Toledo, he said he should be glad to talk with thee in private on that subject. Go instantly and present thyself at his chamber door, where there is an order already given to admit thee. Run, therefore, and bring me back as soon as possible an account of the conversation.'

I flew instantly to the palace, where I found the King alone, walking up and down in expectation of my coming, and seemingly very much perplexed. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, whose history he obliged me to recount: he then asked if the little gentlewoman had never been engaged in any intrigue. I boldly assured him that she had not (though these sorts of assurances are a little rash), and the Prince seemed very glad to hear it. 'If that be the case (said he), I choose thee for my agent with Lucretia; and desire that by thy means she may this evening learn her victory. Go, signify her conquest from me (added he, putting into my hand a diamond necklace worth fifty thousand crowns), and tell her that I desire she will accept of this present until I give her more solid marks of my affection.'

Before I performed this commission I went back

to the Count-Duke, and made a faithful report of what the King had said: with this I imagined the Minister would be more afflicted than rejoiced, for I believed (as I have already observed) that he himself had amorous views upon Lucretia, and would be chagrined to hear that his master was become his rival; but I was mistaken. Far from seeming mortified at the news, it gave him so much joy that, being unable to contain it, some words escaped him, which did not fall to the ground. 'Aha! Philip (cried he), egad, I have you fast! For once you will be sick of business.' This apostrophe disclosed the whole contrivance of the Count-Duke. I now perceived that the Minister, being afraid of the King's applying himself to serious affairs, endeavoured to amuse him with pleasures more suitable to his humour[1]. 'Santillana (said he afterwards), lose no time; make haste, my friend, to go and execute the important order which thou hast received, and which a great many noblemen at Court would glory in performing. Consider (said he) that thou hast here no Count de Lemos to deprive thee of one-half of the honour acquired in this service. Thou wilt have it entirely to thyself, and, moreover, enjoy all the fruits of it.'

Thus did his Excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed down gently, though not without tasting the bitterness of it; for, since my imprisonment, I had been used to look upon things in a moral point of view, and did not think the post of Mercury-in-Chief quite so honourable as it was called. However, though I was not vicious enough to perform it without

[1] Lesage accepts the popular view that Olivares, anxious to keep the conduct of public affairs in his own hands, encouraged Philip IV's taste for dissipation. There are, however, proofs that Olivares, though both jealous of interference and often unduly complaisant to his master's foibles, rebuked the King in writing for 'lack of personal attention' to State business: see Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, *Estudios del reinado de Felipe IV* (Madrid, 1888–1889), i, 33.

remorse, I had not virtue sufficient to make me refuse the employment. I, therefore, obeyed the King the more willingly, as I saw at the same time that my compliance would be agreeable to the Minister, whom it was my sole study to please. I thought proper to address myself at first to Laura, to whom in a private conversation I disclosed my mission in a discreet manner; and, towards the end of the discourse, presented the jewels; at sight of which, the lady being unable to conceal her joy, gave a loose to it. 'Señor Gil Blas (cried she), I ought not to constrain myself before my oldest and best friend. I should be to blame in affecting a false severity of morals, and making grimaces with you. Yes, you need not doubt it (continued she), I am overjoyed that my daughter has made such a precious conquest, all the advantages of which I comprehend; but, between you and me, I am afraid that Lucretia will look upon them with a different eye: for, though a young actress, she is so careful of her chastity that she has already rejected the addresses of two young noblemen both amiable and rich. You may say, indeed, that these were not Kings. True; and in all probability, the passion of a crowned head will shake the virtue of Lucretia. Nevertheless, I must tell you that the thing is uncertain, and I declare that I will never force the inclinations of my daughter. If, far from thinking herself honoured by the transient affection of the King, she shall regard that honour as infamous, let not that great Prince be disobliged, if she shall conceal herself from him. Return to-morrow (added she), and then I will tell you whether you must carry back to him a favourable answer or his jewels.'

I did not at all doubt that Laura would exhort Lucretia to swerve from her duty rather than remain in it, and I depended a good deal on that exhortation. Nevertheless, I learned with surprise next day that Laura had as much difficulty in swaying her daughter to vice as other mothers have to form theirs to virtue; and, which is still more surprising, Lucretia, after

having granted some private interviews to the monarch, felt so much remorse for having yielded to his desires, that she quitted the world all of a sudden, and shut herself up in the convent of the Incarnation, where she soon fell sick, and died of grief[1]. Laura being inconsolable for the loss of her daughter, whose death she upbraided herself with, retired into the convent of the female penitents, there to mourn the pleasures of her youth. The King was affected by the unexpected retreat of Lucretia; but being of a humour not to be long afflicted at anything, consoled himself by degrees for this event. As for the Count-Duke, although he did not seem very much touched at this incident, it did not fail to give him a great deal of mortification; and this the reader will easily believe.

## CHAPTER IV

*Santillana is invested by the Minister with a new employment*

I was also sensibly affected by the misfortune of Lucretia, and felt such remorse for having contributed to it, that looking upon myself as an infamous wretch, in spite of the quality of the lover whose passion I had served, I resolved to abandon the Caduceus for ever. I even expressed to the Minister the reluctance I had

[1] This episode is said to have been suggested by the story of Philip IV's amour with the actress Maria de Calderon ('La Calderona'), mother of the Don John of Austria, who played so prominent a part during the minority of Charles II. 'La Calderona' ended her days as a nun at the convent of La Serranía de la Alcarria: see Casiano Pellicer, *Origen y progresos de la Comedia* (Madrid, 1804), ii, 92. It may be noted that, before she became the mistress of Philip IV, 'La Calderona' had married an actor named Tomas de Rojas: see Cristóbal Pérez Pastor, *Nuevos datos acerca del histrionismo español en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid, 1901), 226.

to bear it, and begged he would employ me in something else. 'Santillana (said he), I am charmed by thy delicacy; and since thou art a man of such honour, will give thee an occupation more suitable to thy virtue. This it is; listen attentively to what I am going to impart.'

'Some years before I was in favour (continued he), chance one day presented to my view a lady so handsome and well made, that I ordered her to be followed. I learned that she was a Genoese, called Doña Margarita Spinola[1], who lived at Madrid on the revenue of her beauty, and that Don Francisco de Valeasar[2], an alcalde of the Court, a rich old married man, spent a great deal of money upon the coquette. This report, which ought to have inspired me with contempt of her, made me conceive a violent desire of sharing her favours with Valeasar; and to satisfy it, I had recourse to a female go-between, who had the address in a little time to procure for me a private interview with the Genoese; and that was followed by many more, so that my rival and I were equally well treated for our presents. Perhaps, too, she had other gallants as happy as we were.

'Be that as it will, Margarita, in receiving such confused homage, presently became pregnant, and brought forth a son, the honour of whom she bestowed on each of her lovers in particular; but not one of them being in conscience able to boast himself the father of that child, it was disowned by them all, so that the Genoese was obliged to maintain it with the fruit of her intrigues: this she did for eighteen years, at the end of which term dying, she has left her son without fortune, and, what is worse, without education.

'This (pursued his Grace) is the secret I had to impart, and I will now inform thee of the great design which I have projected. I will bring this unfortunate

[1] The real name of this personage was Isabel Anversa.

[2] The correct form of the alcalde's name is Francisco Valcárcel.

child from obscurity, and making him pass from one extreme to another, raise him to honours, and own him for my son.'

At this extravagant project, it was impossible for me to hold my tongue. 'How, my lord (cried I), can your Excellency have taken such a strange resolution? pardon me for using that term, which hath escaped my zeal.' 'Thou wilt find it is very prudent (he replied with precipitation), when I have told thee the reasons that have determined me to take it. I don't desire that my collaterals should be my heirs. Thou wilt say, that I am not as yet of such an advanced age as to make me despair of having children by the Countess de Olivares. But every one knows himself best. Let it suffice to tell thee, that there is no secret in chemistry which I have not tried in vain to become a father. Therefore, since fortune, supplying the defect of nature, presents a child to me, whose true father perhaps I am, I am resolved to adopt him.' When I saw the Minister bent on this adoption, I ceased to oppose it, knowing him to be a man capable of committing a foolish action, rather than swerve from his own opinion. 'The sole business now (added he) is to bestow education upon Don Henry Philip de Guzman (for this name I intend he shall bear[1]), until he shall be in a position to possess the dignities that await him. Thou, my dear Santillana, art the person whom I choose to be his tutor. I confide in thy understanding and attachment to me for thy care in regulating his family, in giving him all sorts of masters; in a word, in making him an accomplished cavalier.' I would have refused this employment, representing to the Count-Duke, that I was very ill-qualified to educate young noblemen, having never practised that business, which required more knowledge and merit than I possessed. But he interrupted me, and shut my mouth, by saying, that he was absolutely resolved

[1] The lad had previously been known as Julian Valcarcel: on his adoption by Olivares he assumed the name of Enrique Felipez de Guzman.

to make me governor to this adopted son, whom he destined for the first offices of the monarchy. I prepared myself, therefore, to fill this place, for the satisfaction of his Grace, who, to reward my compliance, increased my small revenue with a pension of a thousand crowns, which he procured, or rather gave me, on the commandery of Mambra.

## CHAPTER V

*The son of the Genoese lady is owned by an authentic act, and called Don Henry Philip de Guzman. Santillana forms the household of that young nobleman, and hires all sorts of masters for him*

The Count-Duke in a little time actually owned the son of Doña Margarita Spinola, and the deed was executed with the consent and inclination of the King[1]. Don Henry Philip de Guzman (for that was the name given to this child of many fathers) was declared sole heir of the Count de Olivares, and of the duchy of San Lúcar. The Minister, that nobody might be ignorant of this event, ordered Carnero to communicate the declaration to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were not a little surprised at his conduct. The wits of Madrid had a fund of mirth from it a long time, and the satirical poets did not neglect such a fair occasion of shedding the gall of their pens.

When I asked where this gentleman was whom his Grace intended to entrust to my care; 'He is in this city (he replied), under the direction of an aunt, from whom I will take him, as soon as thou shalt have prepared a house for him.' This was soon performed. I took a house, which I caused to be magnificently furnished; I hired pages, a porter, and footmen; and with the assistance of Caporis, filled up the places of his officers. When I had completed his household, I went and advertised his Excellency, who immediately

[1] This took place in 1641.

sent for his equivocal heir, and new shoot from the trunk of the Guzmans, and I found him a tall young fellow of an agreeable person. 'Don Henry (said his Grace to him, pointing his finger to me), this gentleman is the guide whom I have chosen to conduct you in the career of life. I have the greatest confidence in him, and give him an absolute power over you. Yes, Santillana (said he, turning to me), I abandon him entirely to your care, and don't doubt that you will give a good account of him.' To this discourse the Minister joined others, exhorting the young man to submit to my directions; after which, I conducted Don Henry to his house, where, when we arrived, I made all his domestics pass in review before him, signifying the office of each. He did not seem confounded at the change of his condition; and accommodating himself to the deference and officious respect that was shown to him, he seemed to have been always that which he was now become by chance. He did not want capacity, but was wholly illiterate, being scarce able to read or write. I furnished him with a preceptor to teach him the elements of the Latin tongue, and hired for him masters of geography, history, and fencing. You may well believe that I did not forget a dancing-master: I was only embarassed in the choice, for at that time there was a great number famous in that profession at Madrid, and I did not know to whom I ought to give the preference. While I was in this perplexity, a man richly dressed came into the Court, and I being told that he wanted to speak with me, went to him, imagining that he was at least a knight of Santiago or Alcántara. When I asked his commands, 'Señor de Santillana (answered he, after having made several bows, which smelled strongly of his profession), understanding that your Worship is the person who chooses masters for Señor Don Henry, I am come to offer my service; my name is Martin Ligero [1], and I have (thank Heaven)

[1] The character of Ligero was suggested by Marcel, who first come into notice at Paris by his clever singing

some reputation. It is not my custom to come and solicit for scholars; that is the province of little obscure dancing-masters. I usually wait until I am sent for; but as I have taught the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Luis de Haro, and some other noblemen of the family of Guzman, to which I am as it were a servant born, I thought it my duty to anticipate your message.' 'I find by your discourse (said I), that you are the man we want. How much do you take per month?' 'Four double pistoles (answered he) is the current price, and I give but two lessons per week.' 'Four doubloons a month! (cried I) that is a great deal.' 'How! a great deal! (replied he with an air of astonishment) you would give a pistole a month to a master of philosophy.'

There was no resisting such a pleasant reply, at which I laughed heartily, and asked Señor Ligero, if he really thought a man of his profession preferable to a master of philosophy. 'Doubtless! (said he): we are of much greater use than those gentlemen. What is a man before he has passed through our hands? what but an ill-licked cub? but our lessons mould him by little and little into a due form. In a word, we teach him to move gracefully, giving him attitudes and airs of dignity and importance.'

I yielded to the arguments of this dancing-master whom I hired for Don Henry at the rate of four double pistoles a month, since that was the price of great masters of his art.

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and dancing the minuet in the *Fêtes venitiennes* (1710); he was appointed dancing-master to the King in 1726, and died in 1759. His enraptured exclamation—*Que de choses dans un menuet!*—survives as a classic example of enthusiasm about trifles. According to one of his best pupils, the fact that Marcel sang as well as danced is in itself proof positive that he was not really a first-class dancer: see Jean-George Noverre, *Lettres sur les arts imitateurs en général, et sur la danse en particulier* (Paris, 1807), i, 84–89.

## CHAPTER VI

*Scipio returning from New Spain, Gil Blas settles him in the service of Don Henry. The studies of that young nobleman, with the honours which were conferred upon him, and an account of the lady to whom he was married. Gil Blas becomes noble in spite of himself*

I HAD not as yet completed the half of Don Henry's family, when Scipio returned from Mexico. I asked him if he was satisfied with his voyage, and he answered, 'I have reason to be so; since, with three thousand ducats in specie I have brought over twice as much in merchandise of the consumption of this country.' 'I congratulate thee, my child (I replied). Thy fortune is now begun; and it is in thy power to complete it, by returning to the Indies next year; or if thou preferrest an agreeable post at Madrid, to the trouble of going so far to amass wealth, thou hast nothing to do but to speak, I have one at thy service.' 'Egad (said the son of Coscolina), there is no room for hesitation. I would much rather execute a good employment near you, than expose myself anew to the perils of a long voyage. Pray, master, explain yourself, what post do you intend for your humble servant?'

For his better information, I recounted to him the story of the young nobleman whom the Count-Duke had introduced into the family of Guzman; and after having told him that the Minister had chosen me Governor to Don Henry, I promised to make him valet de chambre to that adopted son. Scipio, who asked no better, willingly accepted the post, and acquitted himself in it so well, that in less than three days or four days he acquired the confidence and friendship of his new master.

I imagined that the pedagogues whom I had chosen to teach the son of the Genoese would find their Latin

thrown away, believing one at his age undisciplinable. But I was much mistaken. He easily comprehended and retained all that was shown to him, and his masters were very well satisfied with his capacity. I ran eagerly to impart this piece of news to the Duke, who received it with excessive joy. 'Santillana (cried he transported), I am ravished to hear that Don Henry has such a memory and penetration! I perceive my own blood in him; and what convinces me of his being my son is, that I feel as much affection for him as if he had been borne by the Countess de Olivares. Thou seest by this, my friend, that nature declares itself.' I was not fool enough to tell his Grace my sentiments of the matter, but respecting his weakness, left him to enjoy the pleasure (whether true or false) of believing himself the father of Don Henry.

Although all the Guzmans entertained a mortal hatred for this young nobleman of fresh date, they dissembled it out of policy; nay, some of them affected to court his friendship; he was visited by the ambassadors and grandees who were then in Madrid, and honoured by them as much as if he had been a legitimate son of the Count-Duke. This Minister, overjoyed to see such incense offered to his idol, soon decked him with dignities. He began by asking of the King the Cross of Alcántara, with a commandery worth ten thousand crowns, for Don Henry. In a little time after, he was made Gentleman of the Bedchamber. Then resolving to marry him to a lady[1] of the most noble family of Spain, he cast his eyes upon Doña Juana de Velasco, daughter to the Duke of Castile, and had authority enough to accomplish the marriage, in spite of that Duke and all his relations[2].

[1] Don Enrique was already married to a courtesan named Leonor de Unzueta, but Olivares procured the annulment of this marriage.

[2] The marriage with Juana Fernandez de Velasco took place on May 28, 1641: the bridegroom was created Marquis de Mairena in honour of the occasion. The Duke of Frias, Constable of Castile, appears to have opposed the

A few days before the marriage, his Grace having sent for me, put some papers into my hand, saying, 'Hold, Gil Blas, here are letters of nobility, which I have ordered to be expedited for thee.' 'My lord (answered I, surprised at his words), your Excellency knows that I am the son of a poor duenna and squire; so that, in my opinion, the nobility would be profaned by my association; and it is, of all the favours which his Majesty could bestow, that which I deserve and desire the least.' 'Thy birth (replied the Minister) is an objection that is easily removed: thou hast been employed in State affairs, both under the Duke of Lerma's ministry and mine: besides (added he, with a smile), hast thou not done the monarch some service which deserves a recompense? In a word, Santillana, thou art not unworthy of the honour which I have procured for thee. Moreover, the rank which thou holdest with regard to my son, requires that thou shouldst be noble; and it is on that account that I have obtained the patent.' 'I yield, my lord (I replied), since your Excellency insists upon my compliance.' So saying, I went away with my patent in my pocket.

'I am now a gentleman (said I to myself, when I had got into the street), ennobled without being obliged to my parents for my quality. I may, when I please, be called Don Gil Blas, and if anyone of my acquaintance shall take it in his head to laugh in my face when he calls me so, I will show my patent. But let us read it (continued I, taking it out of my pocket), and see in what manner my original meanness is washed away.' I therefore perused the paper, the substance of which was, that the King, to reward the zeal which I had manifested on more than one occasion for his service and the good of the State, had thought

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match rather feebly. His complaisance in yielding was the subject of ribald street-ditties:—

Soy la casa de Velasco
Que de nada tengo asco.

proper to gratify my attachment with letters of nobility. I will venture to say in my own praise, that they did not inspire me with the least pride. Having the meanness of my extraction always before my eyes, this honour humbled instead of making me vain; therefore I determined to lock up my patent in a drawer, and never boast its being in my possession.

## CHAPTER VII

*Gil Blas meets Fabricio again by accident. The last conversation that happened between them, and the important advice which Nuñez gave to Santillana*

The Asturian poet (as must have been observed by the reader) willingly neglected me, and my occupation did not permit me to visit him. I had not seen him since the day of the dissertation on the *Iphigenia* of Euripides, when chance again threw him in my way near the Gate of the Sun. He was coming out of a printing-house, and I accosted him, saying, 'Aha! Mr. Nuñez, you have been at the printer's, that seems to threaten the public with a new work of your composition.' 'That is what indeed it may expect (answered he). I have actually in the press a pamphlet which will make some noise in the republic of letters.' 'I don't doubt the merit of thy production (I replied), but am amazed at thy composing pamphlets, which in my opinion are trifles that do no great honour to a man of genius.' 'I know it very well (said Fabricio), and am not ignorant that none but those who read everything amuse themselves with pamphlets. However, this one has escaped me, which I own is the child of necessity. Hunger, thou knowest, brings the wolf out of the wood.'

'How! (cried I) does the author of the *Count de Saldaña* talk in this manner? A man who has two thousand crowns a year!' 'Softly, friend (said Nuñez to me), I am no longer that happy poet who enjoyed

a well-paid pension. The affairs of the treasurer, Don Bertrand, are disordered all of a sudden. He has fingered and squandered away the King's money; all his effects are seized, and my pension is gone to the devil.' 'That is a melancholy affair (I resumed), but hast thou no hope remaining from that quarter?' 'Not the least (said he). Señor Gomez del Ribero, as poor as his poet, is gone to the bottom, and will never, it is said, get his head above water again.'

'If that be the case, my child (answered I), I must find out some post to console thee for the loss of thy pension.' 'I will spare thee that trouble (cried he). If thou wouldst offer me an employment in the Minister's office worth three thousand crowns yearly, I would refuse it. The business of clerks will not agree with the humour of a foster-child of the Muses; I must enjoy my literary amusements. What shall I say to thee? I am born to live and die a poet, and my destiny must be fulfilled.

'But don't imagine (continued he) that we are very unhappy; besides that we live in perfect independence, we are boys without care. People think that we often dine with Democritus, and there they are mistaken. There is not one of my fraternity, not even excepting the makers of almanacs, who is not welcome at some good table. As for my part, there are two families where I am always received with pleasure. I have two covers laid for me everyday, one at the house of a fat director of the farms, to whom I have dedicated a romance; and the other at the house of a rich citizen, who has the disease of being thought to entertain wits everyday at his table: luckily he is not very delicate in his choice, and the city furnishes him with great plenty.'

'I no longer pity thee then (said I to the Asturian poet), since thou art satisfied with thy condition: though I protest to thee anew, that thou hast always in Gil Blas a friend, who is proof against thy neglect and indifference; if thou hast occasion for my purse come boldly to me, and let not a silly shame deprive

thee of an infallible succour, and rob me of the pleasure of obliging thee.'

'By that generous sentiment (cried Nuñez), I recognize my friend Santillana. I return a thousand thanks for thy kind offer, and out of gratitude will give thee some wholesome advice. While the Count-Duke continues in power, and thou art in possession of his favour, profit by the opportunity, make haste to enrich thyself, for I am told he begins to totter.' I asked Fabricio if he had that intelligence on good authority; and he answered, 'I have it from a knight of Calatrava, who has a very singular talent in discovering the most hidden secrets; he is looked upon as an oracle, and this is what I heard him say yesterday. The Count-Duke has a great many enemies, who are all united to ruin him; he depends too much on the ascendency which he has over the King: that monarch, it is reported, begins to listen to the complaints which have already reached his ears.' I thanked Nuñez for his information, of which I took little notice, but went home, persuaded that my master's authority was immovable, and considering him as one of those old oaks which are rooted in a forest, and which no storms can overthrow.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Gil Blas is convinced of the truth of Fabricio's intelligence. The King goes to Saragossa*

Nevertheless, what the Asturian poet had told me, was not without foundation. There was in the palace a secret confederacy formed against the Count-Duke, and the Queen[1] was said to be at the head of it; but none of the measures which they took to displace the Minister transpired: nay, a whole year passed before I perceived that his favour had received the least shock.

[1] Isabel de Bourbon (1603–1644), eldest daughter of Henri IV.

But the revolt of the Catalonians supported by France, and the bad success of the war against these rebels, excited the murmurs of the people who complained of the Government. These complaints occasioned a council to be held in presence of the King, who desired the Marquis de Grana, the Emperor's ambassador at the Court of Spain, to be there. The subject of their deliberation being whether it was most proper for the King to stay in Castile or go and show himself to his troops in Aragon: the Count-Duke, who was adverse to the Prince's departure for the army, spoke first: he represented that it was better for his Majesty to remain in the centre of his dominions; and supported his opinion with all the reasons which his eloquence could afford. He had no sooner concluded his speech than his advice was unanimously followed by everybody in council, except the Marquis de Grana, who listening to nothing but his zeal for the house of Austria, and giving way to the frankness of his nation, opposed the sentiment of the Prime Minister, and supported the contrary opinion with such force, that the King was struck with the solidity of his arguments, embraced his opinion, though it was opposite to that of the whole council, and fixed the day of his departure for the army.

This was the first time that ever his Majesty durst think otherwise than his favourite; who, looking upon this novelty as a bloody affront, was very much mortified. When the Minister was going to retire into his closet, to bite upon the bridle at liberty, he perceived me, and taking me in along with him, recounted what had passed at council, with great agitation: then, like a man who could not recover from his surprise, 'Yes, Santillana (continued he), the King who for these twenty years past, hath spoke with my mouth and seen through my eyes, now prefers the opinion of a Grana to mine: and in what manner too? loading the ambassador with eulogiums, and in particular, praising his zeal for the house of Austria, as if that German loved it better than I do.

'By this, it is easy to judge (pursued the Minister) that there is a party formed against me, and that the Queen is at the head of it.' 'Why, my lord (said I), should you be uneasy with that conjecture? Has not the Queen, for more than twelve years, been used to see you at the helm: and has not the King been in a long habit of not consulting her? As for the Marquis de Grana, the monarch, perhaps, chose his opinion, out of desire to see his army, and make a campaign.' 'That is not the case (said the Count-Duke), say rather, my enemies hope that the King being among his troops, will always be surrounded by the noblemen who will attend him; and that more than one will be found so much disgusted at me, as to speak to the prejudice of my administration: but they are mistaken (added he); I will make the Prince inaccessible to them all during the journey.' This he actually performed, in a manner that deserves to be related.

The day of the King's departure being arrived, that monarch, after having entrusted the Queen with the care of the Government in his absence, set out for Saragossa; but in his way, passing by Aranjuez, was so delighted with the place, that he stayed there almost three weeks: from thence the Minister carried him to Cuenca, where he amused him still longer, by various diversions. Then the pleasures of the chase detained him at Molina in Aragon; after which, he was conducted to Saragossa.

His army being not far from thence, he prepared for going to it; but the Count-Duke altered his inclination, by making him believe that he would be in danger of being taken by the French, who were masters of the plain of Monzon: so that, the King being afraid of the peril which he had no cause to fear, took the resolution of remaining shut up at home, as in a prison. The Minister taking the advantage of his terror, and under pretence of watching for his safety, guarded him, as it were, from the sight of everybody: and the grandees who had been at a vast expense, to

put themselves in a condition to follow their sovereign, had not even the satisfaction of obtaining one private audience. Philip, at length, tired of being ill-lodged at Saragossa, of passing his time still worse, or if you please, of being prisoner, returned in a little time to Madrid. Thus this monarch finished his campaign, leaving to the Marquis de Los Velez, general of his troops, the care of maintaining the honour of the Spanish arms[1].

## CHAPTER IX

*The Revolution of Portugal, and the Disgrace of the Count-Duke*

A FEW days after the King's return a very disagreeable piece of news spread all over Madrid. It was reported that the Portuguese, looking upon the revolt of the Catalonians as a fair occasion offered to them by fortune, for shaking off the Spanish yoke, had taken up arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their King[2]; that they were resolved to maintain him on the throne, and were confident of success; Spain having at that time on her hands enemies in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia: indeed, they could not have found a more favourable conjuncture for freeing themselves from a dominion which they detested.

What is very singular is that the Count-Duke, while both Court and city seemed to be struck with consternation at the news, wanted to joke with the King, at

[1] Pedro Fajardo, Marquis de Los Velez underwent a disastrous defeat before Barcelona. He was transferred to Sicily, and was signally unsuccessful as viceroy. He died in 1693.

[2] The chronology is fantastic. The Portuguese Revolution began on December 1, 1640. Philip IV set out for Saragossa in the spring of 1642, and did not return to Madrid till the close of the year.

the expense of the Duke of Braganza[1]; but Philip, far from being pleased with his raillery, assumed a very grave air, which disconcerted him and made him foresee his disgrace: he no longer doubted his own fall when he understood that the Queen had openly declared herself against him, and loudly accused him of having, by his bad administration, occasioned the revolt of Portugal. The greatest part of the grandees, especially those who had been at Saragossa, no sooner perceived that a tempest was brewing over the head of the Count-Duke than they joined the Queen; and what gave the last stroke to his favour was the arrival of the Duchess Dowager of Mantua, formerly Governess of Portugal. This lady, on her return from Lisbon to Madrid, plainly demonstrated to the King that the revolution of that kingdom happened through the fault of the Prime Minister.

The discourse of this Princess made a great impression on the mind of the monarch, who, being at length roused from his infatuation for his favourite, stripped him of all the affection which he had entertained for him. When the Minister was informed that the King listened to his enemies, he wrote a letter to him, asking leave to resign his employment, and remove from Court, since people were so unjust as to impute to him all the misfortunes which had happened to the kingdom during the course of his administration. He thought that this letter would have a great effect, and that the Prince still preserved so much friendship for him as to detain him at Court; but all the answer which his Majesty returned was the permission that he desired, with leave to retire whithersoever he would[2].

[1] When it became necessary to tell Philip that the Portuguese had risen, Olivares affected to treat the matter as a huge joke:—'The Duke of Braganza has taken leave of his wits, and has been mad enough to let himself be proclaimed King of Portugal: thus his duchy (which is the fourth part of the kingdom) and his fortune fall to your Majesty.'

[2] Olivares retired on January 16, 1643.

These words, written by the King's own hand, were a thunderbolt to his Grace, who by no means expected such a reply: but though he was very much confounded, he affected an air of constancy, and asked what I would do were I in his place. 'I would soon take my resolution (said I); I would abandon the Court, and pass the rest of my days in peace at some one of my estates in the country.' 'That is wholesome advice (replied my master), and I am fully resolved to finish my career at Loeches, after I shall have once more conversed with the King: for I want to demonstrate to him that I have done all that human prudence could suggest to sustain the weighty burden with which I was loaded; and that it was impossible for me to prevent the melancholy events laid at my door; being no more to blame than a skilful pilot, who, in spite of all he can do, sees his vessel tossed about by the waves and winds.' The Minister still flattered himself that by speaking to the Prince he might adjust matters, and regain the ground which he had lost; but he never could procure an audience, and, besides, he was requested to give up the key of the door by which he used to enter, when he pleased, into his Majesty's apartment. Concluding, then, that there were no further hopes for him, he determined in good earnest to retire. He examined his papers, a great quantity of which he very prudently committed to the flames; then naming the officers of his household and valets whom he intended to follow him, he gave orders for his departure, which was fixed for next day. As he was afraid of being insulted by the populace, in coming out of the palace, he slipped away early in the morning by the kitchen door, and, getting into a sorry coach, with his confessor and me, safely proceeded for Loeches, a village belonging to him, where his lady had built a magnificent convent for nuns of the Dominican Order. Thither he repaired in less than four hours, and all his attendants arrived soon after.

## CHAPTER X

*The anxiety and cares which at first disturbed the repose of the Count-Duke, and the happy tranquillity by which they were succeeded. The occupations of the Minister in his retreat*

Madame de Olivares let her husband set out for Loeches, and stayed a few days after him at Court, with a design to try if by her tears and entreaties she could not effect his being recalled: but in vain did she prostrate herself before their Majesties; the King had no regard to her remonstrances, though artfully prepared; and the Queen, who hated her mortally, beheld her tears with pleasure[1]. The Minister's wife was not repulsed for all that; she humbled herself so far as to implore the good offices of the Queen's ladies; but the fruit which she reaped from her humiliation was to perceive that it excited contempt rather than compassion. Vexed at having taken such humbling steps to no purpose, she went and joined her husband, to grieve with him for the loss of a place which, under a reign like that of Philip the Fourth, was perhaps the first in the monarchy.

This lady's report of the condition in which she left Madrid redoubled the affliction of the Count-Duke: 'Your enemies (said she, weeping), the Duke of Medina Celi, and the other grandees who hate you, incessantly praise the King for having deprived you of the Ministry; and the people celebrate your disgrace with an insolence of joy, as if the end of the national misfortunes was attached to that of your administration.'

'Madam (said my master to her), follow my example, and stifle your sorrow; we must yield to the tempest which we cannot divert. I thought, indeed, that I could have perpetuated my favour even to the end of my life; the ordinary illusion of Ministers and

[1] The Countess de Olivares had been Mistress of the Robes.

favourites, who forget that their fate depends upon their sovereign: has not the Duke of Lerma been mistaken as well as I, though he imagined that his purple was the sure guarantee of the eternal duration of his authority?'

In this manner did the Count-Duke exhort his spouse to arm herself with patience; while he himself was in an agitation, which was daily increased by the dispatches which he received from Don Henry, who, having remained at Court to observe, took care to inform him exactly of everything that happened: it was Scipio who brought the letters from that young nobleman, whom he still served, I having quitted him upon his marriage with Doña Juana. The dispatches of this adopted son were always filled with bad news, and, unhappily, no other could be expected from him. Sometimes he wrote that the grandees, not content with rejoicing publicly at the retreat of the Count-Duke, were again reunited to turn all his creatures from the posts and employments which they possessed, to replace them with his enemies: another time he observed that Don Luis de Haro[1] began to come into favour, and would in all probability, be made Prime Minister. Of all the disagreeable news which my master received, that which seemed to affect him most was the change made in the Viceroyalty of Naples, which the Court, solely to mortify him, took from the Duke of Medina de Las Torres, whom he loved, and gave it to the Admiral of Castile, whom he had always hated.

I may venture to say that during three months his Grace felt nothing in his solitude but trouble and chagrin; but his confessor, who was a Dominican friar, and with the most solid piety, possessed a manly eloquence, had power enough to console him. By means of representing with energy that he ought to bend his thoughts entirely to his own salvation, he had, with the help of grace, the good fortune to detach his mind

[1] Luis Mendez de Haro (1598-1661) was nephew of Olivares, whom he succeeded in office.

from the Court. His Excellency would no longer hear any news from Madrid, his whole care being now engrossed in preparing for his latter end. Madame de Olivares also, making a good use of her retreat, met with a consolation prepared by Providence in the convent which she had founded; there were among the nuns some holy maidens, whose conversation, full of balm, insensibly sweetened the bitterness of her life: in proportion as my master turned his thoughts from worldly affairs, he became more and more tranquil; and, in this manner regulated the day. He spent almost the whole morning in hearing Mass in the church of the convent, and then returned to dinner; after which he amused himself about two hours in playing at all sorts of games with me and some other of his most affectionate domestics; then usually retired by himself into his closet, where he remained till sunset; at which time he took a turn in his garden, or an airing in his coach, in the neighbourhood of his castle, accompanied sometimes by his confessor, and sometimes by me.

One day, being alone with him, and admiring the serenity of his countenance, I took the liberty to say, 'My lord, allow me to express my joy: from the air of satisfaction in your looks, I conclude that your Excellency begins to be accustomed to retirement.' 'I am already quite familiarized to it (answered he), and though I have been a long time used to business, I protest to thee, child, that I am everyday more and more pleased with the quiet and peaceable life which I lead in this place.'

## CHAPTER XI

*The Count-Duke becomes, all of a sudden, sad and thoughtful: the surprising cause of his melancholy, with its fatal consequence*

His Grace, in order to vary his occupations, amused himself sometimes also in cultivating his garden. One day while I beheld him at work, he said to me in a

jocular strain: 'Santillana, thou seest a Minister banished from Court turned gardener at Loeches.' 'My lord (answered I in the same tone), methinks I see Dionysius of Syracuse, schoolmaster at Corinth[1].' My master smiled at my reply, and was not at all displeased at the comparison.

All the people in the house were overjoyed to see their master superior to his disgrace, charmed with a life so different from that which he had always led; when we perceived with sorrow that he visibly changed: he became gloomy, thoughtful, and sunk into a most profound melancholy. He left off playing with us, and no longer seemed sensible of all that we could invent for his diversion; but locked himself up, after dinner, in his closet, where he remained alone till night: we imagined that his chagrin had been occasioned by the returning idea of his past greatness, and in that opinion, left him with the Dominican friar, whose eloquence, however, could not triumph over the melancholy of his Grace, which, instead of diminishing, seemed daily to increase.

It came into my head that the pensiveness of this Minister might have some particular cause, which he was unwilling to disclose; and on this conjecture I formed the design of drawing the secret from him: for this purpose, I lay in wait for an opportunity of speaking to him in private, and having found it: 'My lord (said I with an air of respect, mingled with affection), may Gil Blas be so bold as to put one question to his master?' 'Speak (he replied), I give thee leave.' 'What (said I) is become of that satisfaction which appeared in your Excellency's face? Have you no longer that ascendency which you had once gained over fortune? or does your lost favour excite new regret within you? Would you be plunged again in that abyss of trouble, from which your virtue hath extricated you?' 'No, thank heaven (returned the

[1] There is a legend that Dionysius the younger opened a school at Corinth after his expulsion from Sicily by Timoleon.

Minister), my memory is no longer engrossed by the part which I acted at Court; I have for ever forgotten the honours which I there enjoyed.' 'Why, then (said I), since you have philosophy enough to banish these things from your remembrance, are you so weak as to abandon yourself to a melancholy which alarms us all? What is the matter with you, my dear master? (added I, throwing myself at his feet) you have, doubtless, some secret sorrow that consumes you: will you make a mystery of it to Santillana, whose zeal, fidelity, and discretion you know so well? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence?'

'Thou hast it still (said he): but I confess I have a reluctance to reveal the cause of that sadness with which thou seest me overwhelmed: nevertheless, I cannot resist the entreaties of such a servant and a friend as thee. Know then the cause of my disquiet, which is a secret that I could impart to none but Santillana. Yes (continued he), I am a prey to the most dismal melancholy, which gradually consumes my life. I see almost every moment a spectre, which presents itself before me in the most terrible shape. In vain have I said to myself that it is no more than an illusion, an unsubstantial phantom of my brain: the continual apparition infests my view and disturbs my repose. Though my understanding is strong enough to persuade me that this spectre is really nothing, I am notwithstanding weak enough to be afflicted at the vision. This is what thou hast forced me to disclose (added he), and thou mayst judge whether or not I am to blame in concealing from all the world the cause of my melancholy.' I was equally grieved and astonished to hear such an extraordinary declaration, which was a strong indication of the machine's being disordered[1]. 'My lord (said I to the Minister), is not this occasioned

[1] According to the Jesuit Sebastian Gonzalez, Olivares was said to have received a letter from the King, the contents of which so disturbed him that he fell ill, and began to wander: see the *Coleccion de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* (Madrid, 1842-95), xxxvi, 570.

by too little nourishment? for your abstinence is excessive.' 'That was what I imagined at first (answered he), and to try if it was actually owing to my diet, I have, for some days past, eaten more than usual; but without any effect; the phantom still appears.' 'It will certainly disappear (said I to console him): and if your Excellency would relax yourself a little, by playing again with your faithful servants, I believe you would soon find yourself delivered from these gloomy vapours.'

In a little time after this conversation, his Grace fell sick; and finding the affair grow serious, sent to Madrid for two notaries to make his will; as also, for three famous physicians, who had the reputation of curing their patients sometimes. As soon as the arrival of these last was reported in the castle, nothing was heard but groans and lamentations: the servants looked upon the death of their master as just at hand; so much were they prejudiced against these gentlemen, who had brought along with them an apothecary and surgeon, the usual executioners of their prescriptions. They let the notaries do their business; after which they prepared to do their own: being of Doctor Sangrado's principles, in their very first consultation, they ordered repeated bloodings; so that, in six days, they reduced the Count-Duke to extremity, and on the seventh delivered him entirely from his apparition.

Upon the death of this Minister, a deep and sincere sorrow reigned in the castle of Loeches[1]: all his domestics wept bitterly: far from consoling themselves for his loss, with the certainty of being comprehended in his will, there was not one among them who would not have renounced his legacy to recall him to life. As

[1] Olivares died at Toro—not at Loeches—on July 22, 1645. Sebastian Gonzalez reports that Olivares had asked the King's leave, on account of his failing health, to remove to Loeches, and that the letter which sent him off his balance contained a refusal couched in these terms: 'Tratad ahora de tener salud, que para convalecer buen lugar es Toro.'

for me, who had been beloved by him, and whose attachment flowed from pure personal affection, I was more afflicted than all the rest; and I question whether I shed more tears for Antonia than for the Count-Duke.

## CHAPTER XII

*The transactions at the castle of Loeches, after the death of the Count-Duke; and the departure of Santillana*

The Minister, according to his own direction, being buried without noise and pomp, in the convent of nuns, to the sound of our lamentations; after the funeral, Madame de Olivares ordered the will to be read, with which all the domestics had reason to be satisfied. Every one had a legacy proportioned to his station; and the least was two thousand crowns: mine was the most considerable; his Grace having bequeathed to me ten thousand pistoles, as a proof of his particular affection. He did not forget the hospitals, and founded an annual service in several convents.

Madame de Olivares sent all the domestics to Madrid, to receive their legacies from the steward Don Raymond Caporis, who had orders to pay them; but I could not accompany them, being detained at the castle seven or eight days by a high fever, which was the fruit of my affliction. In this situation, I was not abandoned by the Dominican friar: that good clergyman had conceived an affection for me; and interesting himself in my salvation, asked, when he saw me in a fair way, what I intended to do. 'I don't know, my good father (answered I): I have not, as yet, determined with myself on that score: at some moments, I am tempted to shut myself up in a cell, and do penance.' 'Those are precious moments! (cried the Dominican): Señor de Santillana, you will do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend, without your ceasing to be a layman, to retire, for example,

into our convent at Madrid, to make yourself a benefactor to it, by a donation of all your fortune, and die there in the habit of St. Dominic. A great many people expiate a worldly life by such an end.'

I was then in such a disposition of mind that I began to relish the advice, and told his reverence that I would consider it. But having consulted Scipio, whom I saw immediately after the monk, he inveighed against that sentiment, which seemed to him the whim of a sick person. 'Fie! Señor de Santillana (said he), can you be pleased with such a retreat? Will not your house at Lirias afford one much more agreeable? If you were delighted with it heretofore, you will have a much better relish for the sweets of it now that you are of an age much more proper for tasting the beauties of nature.'

The son of Coscolina had no great difficulty in making me change my opinion. 'Friend (said I), thou hast prevailed over the Dominican. I see it will be better for me to return to my castle, and fix my resolution accordingly: we will repair to Lirias, as soon as I shall be in a condition to travel.' And this happened very soon; for the fever having left me in a little time, I found myself strong enough to put my design in execution. Scipio and I went first to Madrid, the sight of which city no longer gave me that pleasure which I had formerly felt; as I knew that almost all its inhabitants abhorred the memory of a Minister of whom I preserved the most tender remembrance, I could not behold it with a favourable eye: and therefore stayed in it only five or six days, which Scipio employed in making preparations for our departure for Lirias. While he was busy about our equipage, I went to Caporis, who gave me my legacy in doubloons: I likewise visited the receivers of the commanderies, on whom I had pensions, took measures with them for the payment; and in a word, put all my affairs in order.

On the evening before our departure, I asked the son of Coscolina if he had taken his leave of Don Henry. 'Yes (answered he), we this morning parted good

friends: he assured me that he was sorry for my leaving him; but if he was satisfied with me, I was not so with him: it is not enough that the valet pleases the master, the master ought, at the same time, to please the valet; otherwise they are very ill-met. Besides (added he), Don Henry makes but a pitiful figure at Court, where he is sunk into the lowest contempt. He is even pointed at in the streets, and everybody calls him the son of the Genoese. So you may guess whether or not it is agreeable to a lad of honour to serve a man in such disgrace.'

At length we set out from Madrid early one morning, and took the road to Cuenca in the following order and equipage: my confidant and I were mounted in a chaise and pair, conducted by a postilion; three moyles loaded with our baggage and money, and led by two grooms, followed close after; and two lusty lackeys, chosen by Scipio, mounted on mules and armed to the teeth, brought up the rear: the grooms wore sabres, and the postilion had two good pistols at his saddle-bow. As we were in all seven men, six of whom were very resolute, I travelled merrily, without any apprehension of losing my legacy. Our moyles proudly sounding their bells in the villages through which we passed, the peasants ran to their doors to see the march of our equipage, which they imagined belonged to some grandee going to take possession of a vice-royalty.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Gil Blas returns to his castle, where he is overjoyed to find Seraphina, his god-daughter, marriageable: and falls in love with another lady*

I SPENT fifteen days on the road to Lirias, being under no necessity of travelling fast: all that I desired was to arrive at it safely; and my wish was accomplished. The sight of my castle at first inspired me with some melancholy thoughts, in recalling the memory of

Antonia: but I soon banished them, by entertaining my fancy with more pleasant ideas: and this I could the more easily do, as twenty years, which were elapsed since her death, had a good deal weakened the force of my sorrow.

As soon as I entered the castle, Beatrice and her daughter came with great eagerness to salute me: then the father, mother, and child hugged one another with transports of joy, which charmed me.

After their mutual embraces, I looked at my god-daughter attentively, saying: 'Can this be that Seraphina whom I left in the cradle when I departed from Lirias? I am overjoyed to see her again, so tall and so handsome, we must have her settled for life.' 'How! my dear godfather (cried she, reddening at my last words), you have seen me but for a moment, and you already talk of getting rid of me?' 'No, my child (answered I), we don't intend to lose you by marriage: we must have a husband who will enjoy you, without robbing your parents of your company, and in a manner live with us altogether.'

'Such a one offers at present (said Beatrice): a gentleman of this county having seen Seraphina one day at Mass in the village chapel, fell in love with her. He has been to visit me, declared his passion, and asked my consent. "If you had it (said I to him), you would be never the nearer; Seraphina depends upon her father and godfather, who alone can dispose of her. All that I can do for you is to inform them by a letter of your demand, which, I own, does honour to my daughter." Really, gentlemen (added she), I was going to write about it immediately: but now that you are returned, you shall do in it what you think proper.'

'But (said Scipio), what character has this *hidalgo?* Is he, like most of your small gentry, proud of his nobility and insolent to plebeians?' 'Not at all (replied Beatrice): he is a sweet-tempered young man, extremely polite, has a good mien, and is not yet full thirty.' 'You draw an agreeable picture of that

cavalier (said I to Beatrice): pray, what is his name?' 'Don Juan de Jutella (answered Scipio's wife): he has but lately succeeded to his father, and lives in a castle about a league hence with a younger sister, who is under his care.' 'I have formerly (said I) heard of this gentleman's family, which is one of the most noble in the kingdom of Valencia.' 'I esteem his nobility (cried Scipio) less than the qualities of his heart and understanding; and this Don Juan will suit us very well, provided he be a man of honour.' 'He has the reputation of one (said Seraphina, joining in the conversation): the inhabitants of Lirias, who knew him, give him the best of characters.' At these words of my goddaughter I smiled to her father; who having likewise observed them, concluded that his daughter was not displeased at her gallant.

This cavalier soon got notice of our arrival at Lirias, and two days after appeared at our castle. He saluted us gracefully, and, far from contradicting by his presence what Beatrice had said to his advantage, his behaviour made us conceive a high opinion of his merit. He told us, that as our neighbour, he had come to congratulate us upon our happy return; and we received him with all the courtesy in our power: but this visit, which was made out of pure civility, passed in mutual compliments: and Don Juan, without having mentioned a syllable of his passion for Seraphina, retired, only desiring our permission to profit by a neighbourhood, which he foresaw would be very agreeable to him. When he was gone Beatrice asking our opinions of the gentleman, we answered that he had prepossessed us in his favour; and that in all appearance fortune could not offer a better match for Seraphina.

The very next day I went out after dinner with Coscolina's son to return the visit which we owed to Don Juan. We took the road to his castle, conducted by a guide, who (when we had walked about three-quarters of an hour), said, 'There is the castle of Don Juan de Jutella.' In vain did we cast our eyes all

around the country; it was a long time before we perceived it: nay, we did not discover it till we arrived at the gate; for it was situated at the foot of a mountain, in the middle of a wood, whose lofty trees concealed it from the view. The house denoted the nobility more than the opulence of its master; however, when we entered, we found the craziness of the building compensated by the richness of the furniture.

Don Juan received us in a very handsome hall, where he introduced us to a lady whom he called his sister Dorothea, and who seemed to be about the age of nineteen or twenty. She was full-dressed, because having expected our visit, she was desirous of appearing as amiable as she could; and offering herself to my view in all her charms, she made the same impression that Antonia had made upon my heart; that is, I was disconcerted: but concealed my disorder so well that Scipio himself did not observe it. Our conversation, like that of the preceding day, turned upon the mutual pleasure we should enjoy in visiting one another, and living together in a good neighbourhood. He did not, as yet, speak to us of Seraphina, and we gave him no encouragement to declare his passion, resolving that it should first come from himself. During the conversation, I frequently eyed Dorothea, though I affected to look at her as little as possible; and every time our eyes met she darted fresh arrows into my soul. I must say, however, for the sake of truth, that this beloved object was not a perfect beauty: for, though her skin was of a dazzling whiteness and her lips of the complexion of the rose, her nose was somewhat too long, and her eyes too little. Nevertheless, the whole together quite enchanted me.

In short, I did not leave the castle of Jutella as I had entered it; and on my return to Lirias, my mind was so wholly possessed by Dorothea, that I saw nothing but her, and she was the sole subject of my conversation. 'How, master! (said Scipio, looking at me with astonishment) you are very full of Don Juan's sister. Hath she made a conquest of your heart?' 'Yes,

friend (answered I), and I blush at my own weakness. O heavens! must I, who, since Antonia's death, have beheld a thousand beauties with indifference, meet with one, at my age, who, in spite of all my endeavours, inflames me with love!' 'Well, sir (replied Coscolina's son), you ought to rejoice, instead of complaining at the adventure: there is nothing ridiculous in a man of your age being in love; and time hath not as yet so furrowed your brow as to deprive you of the hope of pleasing. Take my advice, and when next you see Don Juan, boldly demand his sister in marriage; he cannot refuse her to such a person as you: and besides, if it is absolutely necessary that Dorothea's husband should be a gentleman, are not you one? You have letters of nobility, and that is enough for your posterity, when time shall have shrouded these letters with that thick veil which covers the origin of all great families: after four or five generations, the race of Santillana will be most illustrious.'

## CHAPTER XIV

*The double marriage celebrated at Lirias, which concludes the history of Gil Blas de Santillana*

Scipio, by this discourse, encouraged me to declare myself the lover of Dorothea, without considering that he exposed me to the risk of a refusal: I could not, however, determine upon it without trembling: for, although I looked younger than I was, and could have sunk ten good years at least of my age, I could not help thinking I had good reason to doubt of my pleasing a young beauty. I resolved, nevertheless, to risk the demand as soon as I should see her brother, who, for his part, being uncertain of obtaining my goddaughter, was not without abundance of anxiety.

He returned to my house next morning, just as I had done dressing; and said, 'Señor de Santillana, I am come to-day, to talk with you about a serious

affair.' I carried him into my closet, where, coming to the point at once, 'I believe (continued he) that you are not ignorant of my errand. I love Seraphina; and as you can sway her father to anything, pray render him favourable to me; procure for me the object of my passion, and let me owe the happiness of my life to you.' 'Señor Don Juan (answered I), since you come to the business at once, give me leave to follow your example; and, after having promised you my good offices with the father of my goddaughter, to demand your interest with your sister in my behalf.'

At these last words Don Juan expressed an agreeable surprise, from which I drew a favourable omen. 'Is it possible (cried he), that Dorothea made a conquest of your heart yesterday?' 'I am quite charmed with her! (said I) and will think myself the happiest of mankind, if my demand is agreeable to you both.' 'Of that you may be assured (he replied): noble as we are, we will not disdain your alliance.' 'I am very glad (answered I) that you make no difficulty in receiving a plebeian for your brother-in-law: I esteem you the more on that account; and in so doing you show your good understanding: but, were you even so vain as to refuse your sister's hand to anybody but a gentleman, know, that I could satisfy your pride; I have laboured twenty years under the Minister; and the King, to recompense the services which I have done the State, has gratified me with letters of nobility, which you shall see.' So saying, I took my patent out of the drawer where it lay concealed, and presented it to the gentleman, who read it attentively, from beginning to end, with vast satisfaction. 'This is excellent! (said he, restoring the papers): Dorothea is yours.' 'And you (cried I) may depend upon Seraphina.'

These two marriages being thus resolved upon, all that remained was to know if the brides would consent with a good grace: for Don Juan and I, being equally delicate, did not intend to force their inclinations. That gentleman returned, therefore, to his castle of Jutella, to propose me to his sister; and I assembled

Scipio, Beatrice, and their daughter, to communicate the conversation I had with that cavalier. Beatrice was for accepting him without hesitation; and Seraphina, by her silence, showed that she was of her mother's opinion. As to the father, he was not indeed averse to the match; but expressed some uneasiness about the dowry which, he said, must be given to the gentleman whose castle had such pressing need of repairs. I stopped Scipio's mouth, telling him that affair concerned me, and that I would make a present to my goddaughter of four thousand pistoles for her portion.

Don Juan returning that very evening, 'Your affairs (said I to him) succeed to a miracle; I wish mine may be in no worse condition.' 'They are also on an excellent footing (he replied), I had no occasion to employ authority to obtain Dorothea's consent: your person is to her liking, and she is pleased with your behaviour. You were apprehensive of your being disagreeable to her; and she is more justly afraid, that having nothing but her heart and hand to offer——' 'What more would I have?' (cried I, in a transport of joy): since the charming Dorothea has no reluctance to unite her fate with mine I ask no more: I am rich enough to marry her without a portion, and the possession of her alone will crown my wishes!'

Don Juan and I, very well pleased with having brought matters happily so far, resolved to hasten our nuptials by suppressing all superfluous ceremonies. I brought this gentleman and Seraphina's parents together; and after they had agreed upon the conditions of the marriage, he took his leave, promising to return next day with Dorothea. The desire I had of appearing agreeable to that lady made me employ three good hours, at least, in adjusting and adonizing myself; and yet, for all that, I could not make myself pleased with my own person. It is only a pleasure for a young man to prepare himself for visiting his mistress: but to one who begins to grow old it is quite a fatigue. However, I was more happy than I deserved to be.

When next I saw Don Juan's sister, she regarded me with such a favourable eye, that I imagined myself still good for something. I had a long conversation with her, was charmed with her disposition; and concluded, that, with delicate behaviour, and a great deal of complaisance, I should become a beloved spouse. Elevated by this agreeable hope, I sent to Valencia for two notaries, who drew up the contract of marriage; then we had recourse to the curate of Paterna, who came to Lirias, and married Don Juan and me to our mistresses.

Thus, for the second time, did I light the torch of Hymen, and had no cause to repent my conduct. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, made a pleasure of her duty; and, sensible of my care to anticipate her desires, soon attached herself to me, as much as if I had been a young man. On the other hand, Don Juan and my goddaughter were inflamed with mutual ardour; and, what is very singular, the two sisters-in-law conceived the most passionate and sincere friendship for one another. As for my part, I found so many good qualities in my brother-in-law, that I felt a real affection for him; and he did not repay it with ingratitude. In short, the union that reigned among us was such, that in the evening, when we parted, only till next day, that separation was not performed without pain; so that, of the two families we resolved to make one, which should live sometimes at the castle of Lirias, and sometimes at that of Jutella, which, for this purpose, received great reparations, by the help of his Excellency's pistoles.

I have for three years, gentle reader, led a delicious life with people whom I love so much; and to crown my felicity, Heaven has blessed me with two children, whom I piously believe to be my own, and whose education shall be the amusement of my old age.

THE END

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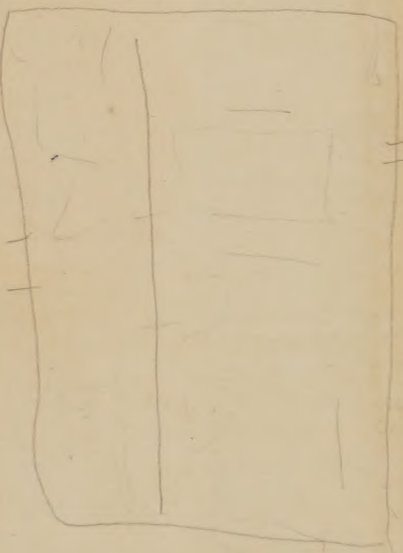

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